DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 386 833 EC 304 221

TITLE	Voices of Freedom: America Speaks Out on the ADA. A Report to the President and Congress.
INSTITUTION	National Council on Disability, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	26 Jul 95
NOTE	264p.; Prepared under contract by Macfadden & Associates, Inc.
PUB TYPE	Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC11 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Accessibility (for Disabled); *Change Agents; Civil Liberties; *Civil Rights Legislation; *Compliance (Legal); Costs; *Disabilities; Employment; *Federal Legislation; National Surveys; Public Policy; Social Change; Social Integration; Transportation
IDENTIFIERS	*Americans with Disabilities Act 1990; National Council on Disability

ABSTRACT

This report examines the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) during the 5 years since its passage in 1990. An introductory chapter considers the overall importance of the Act; the continuing interest of the National Council on Disability (NCD) in the ADA; and the visits of NCD representatives to each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands to conduct town meetings of consumers and those involved in ADA implementation. Major findings are reported in terms of the ADA's effect on: (1) greater access to the physical environment; (2) increased access to employment opportunities; (3) easier communication and mobility; (4) modest implementation costs (despite exaggerated predictions); (5) strengthening of the roles and self-images of Americans with disabilities; and (6) creation of positive changes in American culture. The overall finding is that the law has begun to move the country toward becoming a society in which all Americans, including those with disabilities, can fully participate. Most of the document consists of summaries of town meetings, which are reported by state. Each summary attempts to answer the fundamental question of what the ADA has meant to the people of that state. Four appendices include: a description of the ADA, a description of the NCD, a listing of locations and dates for the town meetings, and a list of speakers at the town meetings. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 386 833

VOICES OF FREEDOM: AMERICA SPEAKS OUT ON THE ADA

A REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS

National Council on Disability
July 26, 1995

EC 304 221

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
M. Quigley
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

National Council on Disability

Voices of Freedom: America Speaks Out on the ADA
A Report to the President and Congress

Publication date: July 26, 1995

National Council on Disability
1331 F Street, N.W.
Suite 1050
Washington, D.C. 20004-1107

(202) 272-2004 Voice
(202) 272-2074 TT
(202) 272-2022 Fax

This report was prepared under contract by Macfadden & Associates, Inc. (MAI).

The views contained in this report do not necessarily represent those of the Administration, as this document has not been subjected to the A-19 Executive Branch review process.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

An independent federal agency working with the President and the Congress to increase the inclusion, independence, and empowerment of all Americans with disabilities.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

July 26, 1995

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The National Council on Disability is pleased to submit to you this report, entitled *Voices of Freedom: America Speaks Out on the ADA*. Under its Congressional mandate, the National Council on Disability is charged with the responsibility to gather information on the implementation, effectiveness, and impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This report describes the implementation of this landmark civil rights legislation from the perspectives of people with disabilities in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Over the past several months, the Council has met with thousands of people with disabilities, with their family members, with business people, and with public servants. Our overall conclusion from these meetings is that the ADA is beginning to create positive and, at times, dramatic changes in the lives of people with disabilities. However, given the many areas where compliance has not yet been achieved, and in recognition of the relatively brief time in which the law has been in effect, it is clear that further efforts are necessary in order to increase public awareness of the Act, furnish education and clarification to covered entities regarding the provisions of the Act, and provide the resources required to encourage voluntary compliance and ensure effective enforcement.

In this report we also address some of the myths that have arisen regarding the ADA. As with any legislation that addresses the painful subject of prejudice in our society, the ADA has been under attack. This report, which describes the real-life experiences of thousands of citizens with disabilities as well as all credible research on this topic to date, challenges these myths.

Today, as we observe—and celebrate—the fifth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I once again pledge our unwavering commitment to ensuring that equality of opportunity,

1331 F Street, N.W. ■ Suite 1050 ■ Washington, D.C. 20004-1107
(202) 272-2004 Voice ■ (202) 272-2074 TT ■ (202) 272-2022 Fax

full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency become realities in the lives of Americans with disabilities. Under your leadership, I remain confident that we can continue to build an America where all citizens have equal access to the achievement of these important goals.

Sincerely,

Marca Bristo

Marca Bristo
Chairperson

(This same letter was sent to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.)

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY MEMBERS AND STAFF

MEMBERS

Marca Bristo, Chairperson
John A. Gannon, Vice Chairperson
Yerker Andersson
Ellis B. Bodron
Larry Brown, Jr.
John D. Kemp
Ela Yazzie-King
Audrey McCrimon
Bonnie O'Day
Lilliam R. Pollo
Debra Robinson
Shirley W. Ryan
Michael B. Unhjem
Rae E. Unzicker
Kate P. Wolters

STAFF

Speed Davis, Acting Executive Director
Billie Jean Hill, Program Specialist
Jamal Mazrui, Program Specialist
Mark S. Quigley, Public Affairs Specialist
Brenda Bratton, Executive Secretary
Stacey S. Brown, Staff Assistant
Janice Mack, Administrative Officer

ABSTRACT

Throughout the five years that have passed since the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law, the National Council on Disability has monitored the progress of its implementation. Between February and June 1995, in keeping with its commitment to the Nation's citizens with disabilities, the Council visited all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in order to learn how effective the ADA has been to date in ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for Americans with disabilities.

In meeting with thousands of people with disabilities, as well as with family members of people with disabilities, business people, and public servants, the Council discovered that the ADA has resulted in real, concrete progress. The report that follows documents real changes in the lives of real people. It demonstrates that:

- People with disabilities are proud to be equal American citizens.
- Children and youth with disabilities are encouraged to go to school, to participate in and learn from their communities, and to prepare for jobs.
- Adults with disabilities are finding a reduction in employment barriers and more freedom to travel in their communities, and they are becoming customers of accessible businesses.
- Families are encouraged to stay together and to participate fully in the lives of their communities.
- Businesses are changing their policies, their facilities, and their attitudes.
- Villages, cities, counties, and States are looking at people with disabilities as real citizens.
- Public awareness of the needs, contributions, and rights of people with disabilities has improved significantly.

People with disabilities are still far from the America promised by the ADA, but the discrimination, misinformation, stereotypes, and environmental barriers that have accumulated over thousands of years of human history are beginning to crumble. The single greatest barrier to the successful implementation of the ADA continues to be the myths that have been created regarding its requirements, its costs, and its intended effects. All across America, citizens testified that when these myths were dispelled, compliance was relatively easy and the results were beneficial. Through publication of this report, we hope to challenge these myths, and to demonstrate the tremendous positive impact the ADA can have in creating a better America for us all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

The Americans with Disabilities Act Five Years After Passage: A Time for Reflection 1
The National Council on Disability's Continuing Interest in the ADA 3
The National Town Meeting Tour 5

Summary of Major Findings 7

The ADA: Greater Access to the Physical Environment 7
The ADA: Increased Access to Employment Opportunities 12
The ADA: Easier Communication, Easier Mobility 16
The ADA: Modest Costs in Spite of Exaggerated Predictions 18
ADA Compliance: Chiefly Voluntary, Not Lawsuit-Based 21
The ADA: Strengthening the Roles and Self-Image of Americans with Disabilities 23
The ADA: Creating Positive Changes in American Culture 24
Conclusion: Equality of Opportunity, Full Participation, Independent Living, Economic Self-Sufficiency — A Formula for Success in American Public Policy 26

Summaries of Town Meetings 29
Alabama 31
Alaska 34
Arizona 38
Arkansas 43
California 47
Colorado 52
Connecticut 55
Delaware 59
District of Columbia 62
Florida 65
Georgia 69
Hawaii 73
Idaho 76
Illinois 80
Indiana 85
Iowa 89
Kansas 92
Kentucky 96
Louisiana 100
Maine 103

Maryland 106
Massachusetts 109
Michigan 112
Minnesota 116
Mississippi 121
Missouri 124
Montana 129
Nebraska 133
Nevada 137
New Hampshire 141
New Jersey 145
New Mexico 148
New York 151
North Carolina 155
North Dakota 159
Ohio 163
Oklahoma 167
Oregon 170
Pennsylvania 174
Rhode Island 178
South Carolina 183
South Dakota 187
Tennessee 191
Texas 195
Utah 198
Vermont 202
Virgin Islands 207
Virginia 210
Washington 214
West Virginia 217
Wisconsin 221
Wyoming 226

APPENDICES

Appendix A: A Brief Description of the Americans with Disabilities Act 233

Appendix B: A Brief Description of the National Council on Disability 237

Appendix C: The ADA National Tour: Locations and Dates for Town Meetings 241

Appendix D: List of Speakers at the 52 Town Meetings 247

INTRODUCTION

The Americans with Disabilities Act Five Years After Passage: A Time for Reflection

On July 26, 1990, President George Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), declaring, *let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down*. Today, five years later, all the major provisions of the ADA have taken effect, and significant public and private sector efforts have increased public awareness of the Act and educated major entities covered by the Act[1]. Five years after the enactment of this historic legislation, it is important to assess whether the goals of the ADA (*equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency*[2]) have (or have not) begun to be realized by people with disabilities.

Although five years is certainly not enough time to expect complete attainment of these far-reaching goals, five years do provide a sufficient time frame to assess the degree to which efforts to implement the law have resulted in progress toward the long-term success. Without such a "reality check," it is possible that promising approaches currently is use could go unnoticed and loose support, or that misplaced efforts at implementation could lead the Nation away from the attainment of the goals of the Act.

In addition, as is the case with any law that seeks to define and advance civil rights, the ADA has been subject to various criticisms that have been reported in the popular media. Investigation reveals that the vast majority of these criticisms are based on misinformation or a focus on extreme situations. For example, it has been charged that compliance with the ADA will bankrupt American businesses. However, there has not been a single reported case where this has happened, *nor could it happen*, given the ADA's flexible provisions such as the *reasonable accommodation* and *undue burden* tests.

---

[1] Please refer to Appendix A for a brief summary of the Act.

[2] P.L.101-336, §2(a)(1-9).

Others have charged that, particularly in the area of employment, the ADA would flood the country with lawsuits. And yet five years and nearly 45,000 complaints later, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency charged with enforcing the employment provisions of the Act, reports that the vast majority of these complaints have either been dismissed or resolved without going to court. In fact, in three years of enforcement activity, the EEOC has filed only 71 lawsuits under the ADA. In addition, EEOC reports that ADA-related cases make up only 20 percent of its caseload. Rather than encouraging lawsuits, the enforcement mechanisms contained in the ADA have resulted in a surprisingly low number of actual lawsuits, given the extent of the ADA's coverage (approximately 666,000 employers nationwide).[3]

It must be asked, then, whether the sometimes vitriolic letters to the editor or the editorials that appear from time to time in the Nation's newspapers reflect reality, or the reason the ADA was passed in the first place: the prejudice and discrimination historically faced by people with disabilities. Clearly, it is important that these issues be explored and that judgments regarding the value of this law be based on reality, not casuistry.

This issue is important to policy makers across our Nation, and it is also important to people with disabilities around the globe. On the day he signed the ADA, President Bush observed:

> *This historic Act is the world's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities. The first. Its passage has made the United States the international leader on this human rights issue.*

Across the world, governments have expressed interest in adopting legislation similar to the ADA. Thus, it is even more important that an accurate, reality-based assessment of progress to date occur.

---

[3] Another indicator of the degree of *voluntary* compliance with the Act is found in the fact that since the passage of the ADA, requests for information on methods of providing reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities have increased by 700% at the Job Accommodation Network operated by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

The National Council on Disability's Continuing Interest in the ADA

As the agency that first proposed the ADA, the National Council on Disability (NCD) has a major interest in learning whether its recommendation to Congress in 1986—

> *to enact a comprehensive law requiring equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, with broad coverage and setting clear, consistent, and enforceable standards prohibiting discrimination on the basis of handicap* (p.18)[4]

—has resulted in positive change.

After enactment of the ADA, Congress charged the NCD with the responsibility to gather information regarding its implementation, effectiveness, and impact.[5] To date, the NCD has been quite diligent in monitoring the Act and in sharing its findings. Given its responsibilities, the NCD has provided the President, Congress, and the American public with a variety of reports regarding implementation of the ADA:

- *ADA Watch: Year One—A Report to the President and Congress on progress in implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act* (1993) detailed early progress in the implementation of the ADA. The purpose of this report was to provide an early assessment of whether the ADA was basically "on track" in the early stages of its implementation.

- *Furthering the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act through disability policy research in the 1990s* (1993) documented the results of a national forum of leaders

---

[4] National Council on the Handicapped. (1986). *Toward independence: An assessment of federal laws and programs affecting citizens with disabilities—With legislative recommendations*. Washington, DC: Author; Note: The National Council on the Handicapped has since been renamed the National Council on Disability.

[5] P.L.102-569 §401(a)(7). Please refer to Appendix B for a brief description of the National Council on Disability.

in the field of disability policy research, including their guidance on how to determine the degree of progress being made in attaining the goals of the ADA as implementation proceeded.

- *The Americans with Disabilities Act: Ensuring equal access to the American dream* (1995) reported on the results of two meetings of experts in public policy at the State and national level regarding implementation of the ADA to date, lessons learned, and future strategies for increased compliance with the law.

In considering how best to approach the fifth anniversary of the ADA from the standpoint of monitoring implementation, the NCD determined that a comprehensive, consumer-based approach would provide the most direct and reliable check on the law's effectiveness to date. The NCD built this conclusion upon recommendations from its earlier conference on ADA research, as well as on the emerging reliance on "customer satisfaction" as a major measurement variable in determining the quality of public policy initiatives.[6]

Numerous studies have been completed that detail progress in implementing the technical provisions of the Act.[7] These studies have provided valuable information and recommendations regarding continuing implementation of the law. However, very little information exists on the law's *overall* impact on the quality of life experienced by citizens. Has *the shameful wall of exclusion come tumbling down*? If so, to what degree? Where are

---

[6] See Gore, A. (1993). *From red tape to results: Creating a government that works better and costs less*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

[7] See, for example, National Council on Disability. (1993). *ADA watch—Year one: A report to the President and the Congress on progress in implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act*. Washington, DC: Author; General Accounting Office. (1994). *Americans with Disabilities Act: Effects of the law on access to goods and services*. Washington, DC: Author; and West, J. (1994). *Federal implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1991-94*. New York: Milbank Memorial Fund.

the largest openings? Even if the wall has come down, has there been a rush across the rubble to unite previously separated parties? Overall, has this law made any real difference in the quality of life experienced by people with disabilities? By the public at large?

The National Town Meeting Tour

To gain a clearer picture of progress regarding these important issues, the NCD determined that it would visit each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Its intent was to hear directly from consumers and those involved in ADA implementation regarding the degree to which the law has affected their quality of life.[8] Through this serious and substantial outreach effort, the NCD hoped to determine whether, and the degree to which, the ADA has changed the nature of American culture. Has a society in which people with disabilities historically were not provided equal opportunities, were excluded, and were kept in dependency become a society in which people with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities, are included, and are empowered, both socially and economically? In addition, the NCD attempted to gain an understanding of the nature of complaints lodged by critics of the ADA within the context of the actual life experiences of people with disabilities covered under the Act.

The report that follows provides a summary of the NCD's findings regarding these substantial questions. These findings are based on the results of town meetings held in each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands between February and June 1995. These town meetings attracted the active participation of thousands of interested citizens, the majority of whom were people with disabilities, or their family members or advocates. Through this consumer-based approach, we obtained information on some of the more substantial, outcome-oriented questions regarding ADA: Has the ADA actually resulted in greater access to the physical environment? Do people with disabilities experience a greater degree of fairness in obtaining and maintaining employment? Has the ADA helped to improve

---

[8] Please refer to Appendix C for a list of dates and locations of meetings.

communication between people with disabilities and persons who are not disabled? Do people with disabilities find that it is easier to get around their towns and cities? Are people with disabilities really considered to be integral parts of the communities in which they live? In 1995, can people with disabilities finally have the same expectations as other people in their communities—to live, work, travel, communicate, contribute to, and generally feel comfortable in their local communities? Our results follow.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The ADA: Greater Access to the Physical Environment

> *Not too long ago, very few places were accessible to people with disabilities. But today it's different . . . people with disabilities can now get out into the world.* (Don Holder, Florida)

In every State of the Union, consumers testified that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has created greater access to the physical environment over the past five years. Consumers spoke in great detail about the important changes that have occurred because of the ADA, citing increased access to virtually every type of environment. Some spoke of entire jurisdictions that had voluntarily embraced the ADA:

> *In Hall County, the public library, the court house, science center, school board building, and even the landfill are being made accessible. Without the ADA, none of the improvements to these facilities would be under way.* (Stephanie Wells, Georgia)

> *We are installing ramps and curb cuts at 15 voting sites in Davidson County. Since budgets are tight, the Elections Commission has arranged with students at Vanderbilt University to do the construction during their spring break. Architects have donated their time to develop the plans. The cost to the county? Just the price of materials. We have installed TDD in the elections office and are trying to educate all elections officials and poll workers about disabilities.* (Michael McDonald, Tennessee)

> One New York town, Tuckahoe—population 6,000—won a first place award of $3,500 from the National Organization on Disability (NOD) for outstanding efforts to implement the ADA. Matthew Marino, a resident of Tuckahoe, reported that the town has established assisted listening devices in meeting rooms, courtrooms, and the community center. Audible traffic signals have been installed, and the town's newsletter is available on audio cassette. Town buildings have been made wheelchair accessible inside and out. Steps have even been removed in the courthouse for jurors and judges. *But our most surprising success story involves a survey we send periodically to residents asking them to identify any disabilities they or a family member may have that emergency personnel should know about in the event of a problem. Residents' responses are entered into a computer, so that in the event of a 911 call, police have immediate access to the information. Other communities have followed our example, and both the local press and the New York Times have reported*

on our 911 program. Tuckahoe will spend its award money on a "talking" computer for the local library. (Matthew Marino, New York)

Other consumers spoke of how the ADA's accessibility provisions have enabled them to work:

As an attorney, I have to be able to get into the courthouse every day. Thanks to the ADA, the building is now equipped with a ramp and an automatic door. (Graham Sisson, Alabama)

I travel around the State for my job, but I couldn't do it if it weren't for the ADA. . . . Twenty years ago, none of these accommodations existed. (Dianne Grace, Washington)

In addition, many individuals reported that implementation of the ADA has enabled people with disabilities to pursue further educational opportunities, thereby increasing their employment and earning potential:

The University of North Texas has installed automatic doors, elevators, curb cuts, and other accommodations that make education much more accessible. (Johnny Martinez, Texas)

My son is now a college freshman at Eastern Kentucky University, because of curb cuts and more accessible buildings. The town of Richmond, Kentucky, in which EKU is located, has become more accessible as well. My son is no longer an outsider. He can participate in activities both on and off campus, thanks to the ADA. (Mary Anne Westerdale, Kentucky)

Implementation of the ADA has also resulted in people with disabilities gaining access to a wider variety of stores and commercial establishments. For example, several speakers at the Maine town meeting reported that shopping has become much easier via automatic door openers, wider aisles, and wider checkout lanes, as well as store personnel who were willing to use paper and pencil to communicate with deaf shoppers. Speakers at other town meetings reinforced this point. At the Virginia town meeting, several speakers stated that the Wal-Mart chain, with its policy of making all stores accessible, is an example for other businesses to follow:

I ride in my wheelchair to the local Wal-Mart and, once there, have no trouble getting in and doing my shopping. There is always an employee

available when a person with a disability needs help in shopping at Wal-Mart. (Juanita Blake, Virginia)

In Wisconsin, we heard this story:

Before the ADA, I couldn't even shop with my daughter for her first prom dress. But things have changed, and I recently did shop with my daughter to buy clothes: for her job interview! (Shelley Peterman Schwarz, Wisconsin)

The accessibility provisions of the ADA were credited by other speakers with allowing families to enjoy their communities together, sometimes for the first time:

Before the ADA was passed, my family couldn't go any place together because of my Mom's wheelchair. But now many places are accessible, and we can go on outings as a family. I'm glad for the ADA. (Kristopher Hazard, Tennessee)

I see the progress the ADA has brought through my father's eyes. In the past, my family could not go out to eat without a family member first visiting the restaurant to make sure my father's wheelchair would make it through the door. Sometimes, he had to come in through the back entrance. It is much easier today. Thanks to the ADA, many more places are accessible. (Cathy Ames, Oklahoma)

Other speakers were pleased that the accessibility provisions of the ADA have opened a whole new world to them: travel. Whether traveling for business or on vacations, people with disabilities are finding it increasingly easier to locate accessible hotels:

The Inn on the Park is doing everything it can to make its services as accessible to guests with disabilities as to everyone else. The first time a group came to the hotel and needed equipment for the hearing impaired, the Inn rented the equipment from another hotel. Then we purchased our own equipment, with the input of some consumers with hearing impairments. Today the Inn on the Park is equipped with TDDs, bed shakers, close captioned TV, brailled menus, emergency evacuation procedures, and a range of wheelchair accessible rooms. Whenever we book a meeting for an organization, we acquire whatever adaptive equipment is needed, if we don't already have it. Front desk staff are trained in the use of adaptive equipment. . . . And our business has even increased a little as a result of working with disabilities groups. (Gary Tidmore, Wisconsin)

Finally, speakers at every meeting were pleased that sports and recreation facilities were becoming increasingly accessible, resulting not only in better fitness, but also in increasing opportunities to meet new friends in communities all across America:

> *Just three stairs and an inaccessible bathroom kept me from enjoying the local recreation center with kids my own age. But a few hundred dollars worth of renovations made the place accessible, and now I can play games and take a boat out when I want to.* (Carl Burnett, Maine)

> *John wanted to participate in weight training, but he couldn't get to the field house because it was located down a steep gravel hill, inaccessible to wheelchairs. I couldn't get the school to make accommodations, until I had ADA behind me.* (Linda Hawkins, Georgia)

> *The Discovery Zone is ramped, so my son can play there with his brother. . . . It didn't take much to make the bowling alley accessible, but if it weren't for ADA, the changes wouldn't have happened.* (Laurie Brink, Maine)

And the future looks increasingly better for accessible sports and recreation opportunities:

> *Two accessible fishing and dock facilities are being built this summer on the Kenai Peninsula. And it is because of the ADA that they are being designed to be accessible. I also know a man who made his fishing boat accessible. There were so many people with disabilities who wanted to go out on his boat, that he realized making his vessel accessible meant more business.* (Jim Beck, Alaska)

> *We have already received contributions totalling more than $110,000 for the Freedom Trail* [an accessible playground]. *The playground will not be specifically for children who are physically impaired, but will be a place where all children can have fun.* (Kenny Violette, Oklahoma)

> *In this project, 100 acres are being made into an accessible park. There will be piers and boat launches that can accommodate wheelchairs. Near the pond will be an accessible area for cleaning and cooking fish. There will be accessible cabins, chartered excursions, and a sensory botanical garden that people with visual impairments can enjoy. We are also planning an accessible trail from the park to Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, about one mile away.* (Mary LeBlanc, Louisiana)

In summary, while the accessibility goals of the ADA have not yet produced universal access, speakers at town meetings all across the country reported that the implementation of the ADA has resulted in greater access to the physical environment:

Before the Americans with Disabilities Act became law, a walk downtown had to be strategically planned. What streets could I use without being hit by a car? If there were sidewalks, were there driveways? How much further out of the way would I have to walk just to get across the street? Needless to say, just a walk was an adventure. . . . Then after getting downtown, maybe the store wasn't accessible. I would just sit inside the entrance and the clerk or friends would bring me the items. . . . We still have a ways to go, but because of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I can get into more and more public places. Things like designated parking spaces, accessible entrances, wider aisles, and accessible restrooms. . . . (Michelle Campbell, Kansas)

Before we had the ADA, it was difficult to convince the business community . . . to accommodate physically challenged people like myself who use wheelchairs. But ever since . . . people have begun to realize that consumers who are physically challenged are no longer isolated, but are integrated into society:

- *Banks have installed electric doors, lowered counters and teller windows, and installed ramps;*

- *Restaurants have rearranged seating and made bathroom stalls big enough for wheelchairs;*

- *Supermarkets and other merchants have widened their aisles and checkout lines;*

- *Many malls have increased their designated parking spaces, added curb cuts, and provided accessible bathrooms;*

- *In the area of construction, they now have to consider that whenever they make renovations to existing buildings or new buildings they must make accommodation;*

- *Hotels have redone a couple of their units to accommodate travellers with wheelchairs; and,*

- *In road construction . . . they have been removing old curbs and replacing them with proper curb cuts.* (Ronald Giovagnoli, New Hampshire)

The ADA: Increased Access to Employment Opportunities

Simply put, the Americans with Disabilities Act allowed me to return to the workforce this past June. After six years of receiving disability benefits, I was able to collect a paycheck. That feels a lot better than waiting on a direct deposit from the government. (Michael R. Todd, Kansas)

How has the ADA affected my life? I got out of bed this morning and went to work. It wouldn't have happened without the ADA. (Paul Gowens, Nevada)

One of the greatest hopes expressed at the time of the ADA's passage in 1990 was that the implementation of the Act would lead to a significant increase in employment for people with disabilities:

Dependency increases the costs of entitlements, lowers our gross national product, and reduces revenue to the Federal government. . . . People with disabilities want to work . . . to be productive, self-supporting and tax paying participants in society. The Americans with Disabilities Act grants us that dignity and that right. (Former Congressman Tony Coelho, 1990)

ADA will empower people to control their own lives. It will result in a cost savings to the Federal government. As we empower people to be independent, to control their own lives, to gain their own employment, their own income, their own housing, their own transportation, taxpayers will save substantial sums from the alternatives. (Former Congressman Steve Bartlett, 1990)

According to speakers at town meetings across the country, the ADA has begun to build a foundation for increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities by reducing discrimination in defining the essential elements of jobs, promoting fairness in the application process, and allowing for reasonable accommodations in the workplace.

First of all, the ADA has caused employers to re-think what constitutes the essential elements of a particular job.

Jerry Droll described an employer who wanted to hire a blind woman, because she tested better than other job applicants. But he was worried because she would be unable to count the money in the cash box. When the employer stopped to think that this activity took place only for an hour every two weeks, he decided to hire her. *The*

employer realized that this small part of the job was not an essential function. She could perform all the essential functions, so he hired her. (Jerry Droll, Ohio)

Tad Childs, Director of IBM's Workforce Diversity Program, sent a letter to the town meeting in which he wrote that the ADA has brought the concept of "essential functions" to his company's attention: *We wanted to be sure we complied with this landmark legislation. IBM has altered its policies on applicant inquiries and medical exams to comply with the law. IBM has developed a comprehensive ADA training program for all its managers, and all line managers are trained to deal with disabilities on a daily basis. We hire talented people with skills and potential who happen to have disabilities. Full and equal access is at the heart of the ADA.* (Tad Childs, California)

Secondly, the ADA has added fairness to the job qualification and application process, reducing the amount of prejudicial prejudgment applicants with disabilities face simply because they have disabilities:

Before the ADA, I could go to a job interview and the employer could say, "We won't hire you because you're disabled," and I had no legal recourse. (Tim Harrington, Ohio)

Dallas-Fort Worth Airport has dropped arbitrary barriers to employment. The Airport reports that they are finding better applicants than before and would like to hire more people with disabilities. (Kimberly Bunting, Texas)

Thanks to the ADA and the Alabama Bar Association, I was able to take the bar exam in a large print version, and I was given extra time. (Beth Butler, a young attorney with a visual impairment, Alabama)

Third, the ADA has opened up the job market for people with disabilities through the allowance of reasonable accommodations. Some of these reasonable accommodations involve assistive devices:

I used to have to type with my nose. But I got a new type of keyboard, so now I don't have to. I wouldn't have been able to get this accommodation if it weren't for the ADA. (Mike Roselle, New York)

Mary Beth Metzger is a personnel administrator who happens to be blind. Graphical user interfaces enable her to use her computer. She credits the ADA with getting people's attention: *There were disability rights laws in existence before the ADA, but it*

took the ADA to ensure that these laws are enforced. (Mary Beth Metzger, New York)

Ann Pal agrees. *The ADA made my employer aware of assistive listening devices. My employer bought the device, as well as a TDD and a hearing aid-compatible telephone. Without this equipment, I wouldn't be doing my job as a physical therapist today.* (Ann Pal, Alabama)

Some reasonable accommodations involve modifying the existing work space:

When I started working at Home Depot, I was asked what could be done to make the store accessible for me and for others as well. . . . At my request, the cash register was modified so I could operate it. (Jeff Miller, South Carolina)

I am treated like any other employee. Whenever I let my supervisor know about barriers at work, they are removed. Once, my supervisor saw that I could not reach the time clock because a cabinet was in the way. He yanked out the cabinet when he realized it blocked my reach. (Butch Towne, Massachusetts)

Other reasonable accommodations involve providing flexibility in work schedules:

Sheila Brown said that was diagnosed with breast cancer a few months ago, and that her employer has been accommodating. *I can work a flexible schedule, and I am allowed to work from home when I need to.* (Sheila Brown, Alabama)

Another person, whose condition requires her to rest, keep warm, and elevate her legs, has been accommodated at work fairly easily. Her employer gave her the warmest office, and she uses an ottoman to raise her legs. She also takes breaks when necessary. *Once, when I couldn't come to work at all, but had a meeting to run, my boss allowed me to conduct it via a conference call. Even though I needed to rest at home that day, I could still do my job.* (Fatica Ayers, Ohio)

Other reasonable accommodations involve help in the form of interpreters, personal assistants, or job coaches:

Drew Weldon had nothing but praise for her employer, Blue Cross-Blue Shield: *They got me an interpreter for meetings and lectures, and I never even had to ask for a TTY.* (Drew Weldon, Alabama)

Kit Phillips is proud that her daughter Tina is employed and lives on her own, in spite of the fact that she is mentally retarded and has a physical disability. Her group is working to assist young people with disabilities make the transition from school to work: *We just got a grant to hire a job coach to work with young people. Once a young person is employed, the job coach will work with him or her and the employer until all three feel comfortable that the employee can do the job. An ongoing resource,*

the job coach will check in periodically with each employee in the program. (Kit Phillips, Oklahoma)

Another parent expressed satisfaction that her son was being supported in his job by both a good supervisor and a job coach. The employment provisions of the ADA have meant a great deal to her and her family. Her son, a young man with mental retardation, is employed 20 hours a week at a grocery store, bagging groceries and carrying them to cars for customers. *My son is earning a minimum wage and working 20 hours a week. It's a lot better than staying home and not having the chance to develop any job skills!* (Sandra Kutz, Nebraska)

Whatever the form of reasonable accommodation, managers are much more likely to support the employment of people with disabilities in their departments when the cost of these accommodations is part of a centralized company account.

Brian Smith, who is blind, is an Assistant Vice President for Personnel at NationsBank in Dallas. NationsBank is committed to making reasonable accommodations. In fact, the company has set up a separate cost center, so that managers are free to base their hiring decisions on skill, education, and experience, rather than on the cost of accommodation: *The ADA opened doors for me to use my education and experience to get a good job and to do what I was trained to do.* (Brian Smith, Texas)

Unemployment among people with disabilities is still at the level of 65–70 percent. This is clearly unacceptable, and the unemployment level has not changed appreciably during the five years the ADA has been in effect. Yet, consumers all across the country testified to the fact that the ADA was beginning to change the structural barriers that had previously made work impossible. In addition, other factors such as the discrimination faced by people with disabilities in accessing nongovernment-supported health care insurance and the continuing barriers to employment contained in Social Security regulations were cited as reasons for lack of substantial progress in changing the unemployment rate.

Can people with disabilities work in substantially greater numbers? The answer from consumers is affirmative. However, it is obvious that the ADA alone does not provide sufficient answers to this problem. In the ideal situation under the ADA, people with disabilities could be absolutely free from discrimination.

Yet they would risk losing what few possessions they might have and all of their medical insurance (even when they have complex medical needs) in order to take a part-time, minimum-wage job. For too many Americans with disabilities, work does not pay.

In spite of these continuing barriers to employment, improvements such as more careful definition of the essential functions of jobs, increased fairness in the job application and qualification processes, and the allowance of a wide variety of reasonable accommodations in the workplace are allowing more Americans with disabilities to go to work, gain control of their lives, and exit government-supported programs:

> *Employers are seeing advantages to hiring people with disabilities. They are competent employees, enthusiastic and productive. My friends and I appreciate the ADA. Today I'm speaking on behalf of several friends who couldn't come because they're working. Blame the ADA for that!* (Glen Barr, Tennessee)

The ADA: Easier Communication, Easier Mobility

In order to work and to be participating members of communities, people with disabilities need to be able to communicate with others and experience the same type and degree of mobility that non-disabled citizens experience as part of everyday life. Speakers at town meetings all across the country reported that since the passage of the ADA, communication and mobility have become easier.

In particular, the establishment of telephone relay systems across the country has significantly improved communication options for people with hearing or speech impairments:

> *The benefits that Title IV's requirement for relay services has brought are undisputed. Integration of deaf, hard of hearing, and speech impaired individuals through the telecommunication network brought these individuals increased freedom, independence, and privacy.* (Michael Zeledon, Minnesota)

> In Arkansas, Gwen Winston, who is profoundly deaf, was appreciative of the fact that *. . . my little country church put in a loop.* (Gwen Winston, Arkansas) Another woman at the Arkansas town meeting reported that she had never used a telephone in

her life. She was excited about the relay system: *Now I can talk on the phone all I want.*

The Georgia Highway Patrol has also made its services more accessible by installing a TDD. They have not always had access through the relay, and they wanted to make sure deaf people could reach them in an emergency. (Sandy Marchman, Georgia)

Mark Calucci, who has a hearing impairment, described a pre-ADA experience: He was driving his car when a torrential rainstorm broke out. The road became flooded, and his car stalled. There was no place to move the car, so he walked to a nearby gas station. *There was no hearing aid-compatible phone and no phone with a volume-raising switch, so I tried to explain my situation to the manager and get him to call my family or the police or a tow truck for me. The owner refused to help. His young assistant even snuck outside to make the call, and was promptly fired.* Finally, Calucci called his brother, and just hoped that his brother was listening. *Today none of that would have happened. With the ADA, I can use a public phone instead of being at the mercy of others in an emergency.* (Mark Calucci, Connecticut)

Family members have also benefitted from the establishment of relay services:

Although not deaf himself, Mark Palmer has benefited from the advances the ADA has offered people with hearing impairments: *I never got to be a child because I always had to interpret for my deaf parents.* Palmer described the pressure he felt growing up having to hear and speak for his parents. In medical situations, with merchants, with the police, on the phone, even when he was sick, he was continually thrust into the adult role of having to take care of his parents' needs. Palmer recounted how difficult it was to make phone calls for his parents: *People often wouldn't respond to me because they knew I was a kid.* But today the situation is much improved. Palmer's parents use the relay service, and they watch captioned TV: *I am no longer required to make sure my parents' needs are met because they can do it themselves!*

In the area of mobility, speakers provided many examples of how the ADA has made mobility both possible and easier:

After years of staying home, I can finally get out of my house and travel. (Sally Scubin, Virginia)

The transportation part of the ADA is changing my life. I can visit my 88-year-old Dad, swim, and go to the library, all because of transportation called for in the ADA. (Christina Keefer, California)

Most people would not think that a blind person who uses a wheelchair could travel independently, hold a job, and be a taxpayer. But the transportation access

requirements of the ADA allow me to make my 220-mile commute to Boston from my home in Northampton several times a month. (Denise Karuth, Massachusetts)

In 1992, paratransit was restricted to medical trips. I couldn't use it to get to job interviews. Now I can take it almost anywhere. I can take my three-year-old to a movie or a store. (Susan Stacy, Tennessee)

It is well documented that transportation is the main barrier for people with disabilities to work. But improvements in paratransit have given people with disabilities more access to employment and to other activities as well. (Kathleen Gregg, New Jersey)

Pablo Viera reports that transportation is the single greatest impact the ADA has had on his life. When he graduated from college in 1992, ready to go to work, he had no way to get there. His town of Vineland had no public transportation, and he could not afford to buy a car until he could get a job to pay for it: a Catch 22. But Viera applied for New Jersey Transport Access Link and was accepted: *I no longer had the anxiety of wondering if my relatives, friends, or church members had the time to take me to the places I needed to go. I now have a better job, more conveniently located, and while I still use paratransit, I should be able to buy my own car in about a month.* (Pablo Viera, New Jersey)

With increased opportunities in the areas of communication and mobility, people with disabilities will be able to gain access to new jobs, pursue expanded career opportunities, and interact with family members, friends, and other community members more frequently. They will reduce their dependence on government programs while making greater contributions to their communities and to the Nation as a whole.

The ADA: Modest Costs in Spite of Exaggerated Predictions

Because of the ADA, the city put lifts on buses, and I became an employed person again. I spend my money and pay taxes, thanks to an accessible transportation system that wouldn't have occurred without the ADA. ADA let me get out of social services and into a productive, meaningful life. (Jesse Tyler, Georgia)

Once they understand the ADA, their fears are alleviated. It's a pleasure to see their worry turn to relief when they realize that a ramp will cost them only $200, not $3000. (Mary Elizabeth Rider, Alaska) .

When the ADA was signed into law in 1990, some claimed that compliance with the law would be very costly, possibly bankrupting businesses and municipalities. This has not occurred, nor could it have occurred, given language in the law itself that limits costs that represent an "undue hardship" to covered entities. Instead, in meeting after meeting, speakers described the reasonable costs that have been involved in implementing the Act as well as the many financial benefits that have resulted for people with disabilities, for businesses, and for the public as a whole as a result of the ADA.

> *The State government in Tennessee has hired many people with disabilities, and the cost of accommodation has been low. More than half of the accommodations cost nothing at all. For those accommodations that did cost money, the average cost was $206.* (James Davis, Tennessee)

> *The Cerebral Palsy Foundation conducts an annual survey of employers. The Foundation has found that most reasonable accommodations cost less than $500. Employers are pleased to find that the things I need are very inexpensive!* (Elizabeth Pazdral, California)

> *The main accommodation I needed at work was just a couple of wooden blocks to raise my computer desk so that my wheelchair could fit under it. The cost? Less than five dollars!* (Kenneth Golden, Kansas)

The costs of ADA compliance reported by speakers all over the country were consistent with the evolving body of national research that demonstrates that the cost of compliance is usually quite modest and reasonable. For example, as we observed in an earlier report[9] to the President and Congress:

> *The law itself requires that covered entities incur the costs of "reasonable accommodations" to make their facilities, programs, and services accessible to individuals with disabilities unless such accommodations pose an "undue hardship" on the entity. Given this two-part test, there is obviously room for discussion regarding both what is "reasonable" and what constitutes an "undue hardship." Thus, there is no concrete requirement that covered entities must absolutely make every accommodation requested by every individual with a disability. Furthermore, it has been found that reasonable accommodations often do not require a great deal of expense. For example, the Job Accommodation Network sponsored by the President's Committee on*

---

[9] National Council on Disability. (1995). *The Americans with Disabilities Act: Creating equal access to the American dream*. Washington, DC: Author.

Employment of People with Disabilities reports that based on its national data bank, using the average (mean) cumulative figures, for every dollar spent to make an accommodation, the company got $15.34.[10] *In addition, a recent study based on the experience of Sears, Roebuck, and Company in making reasonable accommodations reported that the average accommodation cost the company $121.00. The study also reported that 69% of accommodations cost nothing, 28% cost less than $1,000, and only 3% exceeded $1,000.*[11] *These data are in general agreement with the overall data reported by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. Thus, the idea that compliance with the ADA will cause great financial burdens to covered entities is not supported by either the provisions of the law itself or by practical experience to date in implementing the law.*

Beyond the issue of cost, the ADA has tangible economic benefits. First of all, compliance benefits people with disabilities:

After six years of receiving disability benefits, I am now able to collect a paycheck. ADA has removed barriers to employment, and it feels good once again to be a contributing member of society. ADA is a wonderful piece of legislation that has allowed many of us to achieve independence. (Michael Todd, Kansas)

Second, compliance with the ADA can benefit businesses:

Businesses may worry about the cost of making reasonable accommodations. But they also want to attract customers. If it costs $100 per square foot to make a place accessible to 85% of the public, why not spend $10-$12 more per square foot to reach 100% of the population? (Kirk Tchernershoff, Alabama)

People in wheelchairs are not the only ones who benefit from the changes. We are in a tourist area, and there a lot of elderly people as well as young people with strollers who take advantage of the ramp. I encourage other business owners to go above and beyond the ADA. This has increased my business. (Jock Lijoi, Tennessee)

Since the ADA, so many opportunities have opened up. Now we can go into any market together without my having to lift Angela over the curb. Even when Angela is not with me, I try to patronize accessible places. If I have a choice between a place that is not accessible and one that is, I'll chose the one that is. (Ian Miller, Tennessee)

---

[10] Job Accommodation Network. (1994). *Accommodation benefit/cost data.* Morgantown, WV: Author (p. 4).

[11] Blanck, P. (1994). *Communicating the Americans with Disabilities Act — Transcending compliance: A case report on Sears, Roebuck, and Co.* Washington, DC: Annenberg Washington Program.

Finally, compliance with the ADA benefits all Americans, by creating opportunities for people with disabilities to work, to become less dependent on tax-supported government programs, and to contribute to the tax base itself:

> *It's expensive to support a person with a disability on public funds or to keep someone in a nursing home, especially when that person could be out earning money. The ADA saves taxpayers' money.* (Ian Miller, Tennessee)

> *The growth in the number of people with disabilities who have been employed due to a drop in barriers means a reduction in Social Security costs and a saving of taxpayers' money.* (Kathleen Gregg, New Jersey)

> *Not only is this increase in transportation availability good for the transit users, but it saves the taxpayers money as well. Medicaid allots $19.00 in transportation costs for a medical trip, but a ride to a medical appointment on paratransit costs just $1.50, a significant savings.* (Karen Vaughn, Indiana)

> *I have placed 54 people with disabilities in jobs. In addition to being productive citizens, these people have contributed more than $91,000 in taxes to their local, State, and Federal governments* (Kenton Dickerson, Tennessee)

ADA Compliance: Chiefly Voluntary, Not Lawsuit-Based

When the ADA became law in 1990, some predicted that it would lead to numerous lawsuits. Critics charged that terms such as *reasonable accommodation, undue hardship,* and *readily achievable* found in the law were too vague; they would give rise to multiple interpretations and, thus, numerous lawsuits. However, if one studies the history of the ADA, from its initial drafts through its overwhelming passage in both the House and the Senate after extended and serious dialogue and negotiations with the Bush Administration, one can see that the ADA actually represented a very balanced approach to redressing the historical discrimination and exclusion experienced by people with disabilities in America, a maturing of our national approach toward the protection and advancement of civil rights.

According to participants in town meetings all across the country, the result of this new approach to civil rights has been essentially voluntary compliance on the part of the majority of covered entities:

> *Although I was vice president of the local arts guild, I had to enter through the back door. I requested a ramp at the front door and got it.* (Wynelle Carson, Tennessee)

> *A few years ago, the neighborhood 7-11 store did not have a ramp. I went to the manager and asked for one, and a week later it was there. When I went to a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant, there was a ramp, but a tiny step at the doorway still kept me out. I explained the problem to the manager and it was soon fixed.* (Gary Lyle, Virginia)

> *We wrote letters to a local grocery store requesting ramps and handicapped parking. The store honored our requests. I also asked for and got an elevator installed in City Hall after I told officials that being carried to the second floor for City Council meetings was unacceptable to me and that it presented a liability problem for the city.* (Larry Breneman, Tennessee)

> Carol Bowen told a store owner that she could not shop at his store because the aisles were inaccessible. *He measured the width of my chair and then he re-did the store. Now it is completely accessible.* (Carol Bowen, Virginia)

Even in situations in which people with disabilities have met with initial refusals to accommodate to their needs, they have not automatically proceeded to file lawsuits:

> *We repeatedly asked a steak house to make accessibility improvements, but we were ignored. So we set up our own table outside the restaurant and sent someone in to order our food. Of course, this attracted a crowd, and the restaurant soon made the changes.* (Wynelle Carson, Tennessee)

In meeting after meeting across the country, Council members asked participants to raise their hands if they had worked to negotiate with others regarding ADA compliance. Hundreds did so. When the same people were then asked if they had filed a lawsuit based on the ADA, very few raised their hands. In short, the high degree of voluntary compliance with the provisions of the ADA is a credit to those who framed the Act, citizens with disabilities who have demonstrated creativity and endurance in pursuit of their civil rights, and all of those covered entities that have chosen to comply with the Act voluntarily.

The ADA: Strengthening the Roles and Self-Images of Americans with Disabilities

The ADA has done a lot for my mental attitude about approaching employers. I know you can't legislate confidence, but in a way, ADA has done that for me. (Jerry Vogt, Wisconsin)

Across the Nation, people with disabilities testified as to the major positive changes that the ADA had made in their abilities to serve in ordinary and valued social roles, as well as their own self-images:

My kids are free to be kids. And by increasing accessibility, the ADA has allowed me to be the Mom I want to be. (Sharon Hazard, Tennessee)

With the ADA, I finally have a role independent of my husband. I can get into buildings, go grocery shopping, all on my own now. (Evelyn Williams, Mississippi)

Before the ADA, I had to ask my daughter to make phone calls for me and interpret for me. Now she can play. I don't have to interrupt her any more. We both like it better this way! (Sherry Rademacher, Tennessee)

As a person with a disability, I find the best part of ADA is gaining access to somewhere I've never been before. (Jeff Simon, Kansas)

I was the first hearing impaired juror in Arkansas. In the past, people with hearing impairments were kept off juries because [it was believed that] *an interpreter might distract other jurors.* (Ann Garner, Arkansas)

Our 10 days [in Hawaii] *were great. The tour buses and trolleys all had lifts, and it felt good to be able to travel just like anyone else.* (Paul Wysocki, Washington)

I was a prisoner in my own home, so I advocated for paratransit. Then came the news that paratransit would begin. I was so excited! And I felt so proud zipping around stores in my wheelchair, making my purchases. (Lauren Esposito, Connecticut)

A weight was lifted from my shoulders when the ADA passed. The ADA has given me the confidence that, if I work hard and succeed in school, I can expect to find a good job. (Ken Adell, Wisconsin)

Strengthened roles and more positive self-images will empower people with disabilities to achieve greater levels of independence, to participate in their communities, and to become positive examples to all citizens of the potential for achievement that rests within all people with disabilities. Through this interactive process, prejudice and discrimination will be lessened and more opportunities opened.

The ADA: Creating Positive Changes in American Culture

> *Overall, society is more accommodating to people with physical and visual impairments than before the ADA.* (Rick Treano, New Jersey)

One of America's strongest cultural values is the acceptance and celebration of diversity. We are a Nation of immigrants, a "melting pot" of various cultures, creeds, and backgrounds. In America, it is thought that it is "normal" to be different. Yet, like many cultural ideals, we often fall short of our cultural goal of accepting and celebrating diversity. However, legislation such as the ADA assists us in coming closer to this goal.

Speakers all across the Nation told stories of how the ADA is creating positive changes in American culture, changes that will move us closer to our cultural ideals. First of all, it is increasingly clear that the beneficiaries of the ADA are not just people with disabilities; the ADA benefits all Americans:

> *Clearly, ramps and curb cuts are better, not only for people with disabilities, but for many of the non-disabled as well: parents pushing strollers, bicyclists, people with injuries, and elderly people.* (Rick Tessandore, Alaska)

> *I suffered a wrist injury, and while wearing a cast, I found lever-type door handles installed in businesses and public facilities a life saver. I applaud ADA for improving the lives of all Americans.* (Allison Walters, Kansas)

> *The ADA is not just for people with disabilities now, but it affects us in the future too. The ADA will keep us from being restricted as we get older. I want the ADA to be there for me down the road if I need it.* (Michelle Rico, Nevada)

Changes brought about by the ADA have made many people in our culture realize that being non-disabled may only be a temporary condition. Like Michelle Rico above, many people now expect that at some point in their lives, they might experience disability. However, with the physical changes and—in particular—the growing attitudinal changes that have been brought about as a result of people with disabilities being visible and *expected* members of everyday life, the fear and drama that once characterized the approaches many people took to disability are fading away:

> *The ADA helps able-bodied people as well. It helps me in two ways. First of all, I could become disabled at any time and would really need the law. And second, thanks to the ADA, I've gotten to know some fine people I wouldn't have met if curb cuts, wheelchair lifts, and other improvements hadn't been made that allow people with disabilities to get out in the world.* (Liz Patrick, Georgia)

> *The city* [of Boulder] *has really taken accessibility to heart. I can pile my three kids onto my wheelchair and we go exploring all over the city.* (Bruce Gougen, Colorado)

> *I was eating in a Walgreen's restaurant, and the little girl in the next booth kept turning around and staring at me. Then she walked by me to the bathroom, staring all the while. On her way back, she stopped and asked me what was wrong with me. I explained that I fell down and broke my back, so I can't walk. Then I heard the girl tell her mother, "See, Mom, I told you there's nothing wrong with him!"* (John Roberts, Colorado)

This child's perspective may indicate that the increasing visibility of people with disabilities as part of everyday life is leading to a cultural *expectation* that disability is a natural and expected part of life.

Dawn Caldwell's son has cerebral palsy. But unlike generations of parents of children with disabilities before her, Dawn can *expect and look forward to* his valued participation in preschool next year, just like any other parent:

> *It's great to see how attitudes have changed. All the preschools we looked at were accepting and eager to have Alex. They have ramps and accessible bathrooms. Thanks in part to the ADA, I can take my son anywhere and he will feel included.* (Dawn Caldwell, Ohio)

The values embodied in the Americans with Disabilities Act—equal protection under the law, individual empowerment, freedom of association, economic opportunity, etc.—are important to and for all Americans. Our national culture of participatory democracy is enriched every time a previously excluded group is empowered to become part of our expected cultural fabric. The ADA is leading us in the direction of this positive change on a daily basis.

Conclusion: Equality of Opportunity, Full Participation, Independent Living, Economic Self-Sufficiency—A Formula for Success in American Public Policy

> *The ADA has removed barriers to public transportation, employment, public services, and telecommunications—barriers that have cost us economically and socially.* (Dale Kennedy, Arkansas)

The Americans with Disabilities Act remains a major example of success in progressive public policy. Although clear in its insistence that the civil rights of people with disabilities be established, protected, and enforced, it is also clearly an example of maturation in our national approach to creating positive social change, benefitting all Americans, both today and in the future:

> *The ADA is fantastic. I can go out and participate. The ADA makes me feel like I'm one of the gang.* (Sandra Brent, Arkansas)

> *Even though we had the Rehab Act of 1973, it took the ADA to make real change. The ADA has given me hope, independence, and dignity.* (Yadi Mark, Louisiana)

> *Because of the ADA, I have more of the opportunities that other people have. Now I feel like a participant in life, not a spectator.* (Brenda Henry, Kansas)

> *A successful person with a disability was once thought of as unusual. Now successful people with disabilities are the rule. It's the ADA that has opened the door.* (Donna Smith-Whitty, Mississippi)

In summary, our overall finding is that when we examine the negative rhetoric and reports that have characterized certain media outlets over the past five years, and compare

them with the actual research data and the experiences of people with disabilities, of their family members, of businesses, and of public servants, we discover that this relatively new law has begun to move us rapidly toward a society in which all Americans can live, attend school, obtain employment, be a part of a family, and be a part of a community in spite of the presence of a disability. What is needed now is a renewed commitment to the goals of the Act (which were crafted under unprecedented bipartisan efforts), sufficient resources to support further education and training concerning the ADA, and effective enforcement.

The above is but a brief summary of what thousands of consumers told us about the positive impact the ADA has had on their lives over the past five years. In the pages that follow, we summarize stories and comments heard in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Although implementation of the ADA has not occurred evenly, citizens across the Nation report that the ADA is beginning to make a real difference. From Maine to California, from Texas to Alaska, the ADA is improving the lives of all Americans.

SUMMARIES OF TOWN MEETINGS

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

ALABAMA SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 14, 1995

Host organization: Birmingham Independent Living Center

NCD Member: Mary Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Alabama?

The ADA is making a difference to residents of Alabama. And one of the Act's major impacts is in the area of employment. An unidentified speaker talked with pride about her brother who has mental and developmental disabilities. "In the past, he couldn't keep a job," the speaker said, "but since the ADA passed, a grocery store hired him." The store manager is aware of her brother's needs and accommodates him, she says. "And he now provides for himself and his family," the speaker said.

Another woman, ***Beulah Brown***, told those present that she was diagnosed with breast cancer a few months ago, and that her employer has been accommodating. "I can work a flexible schedule, and I am allowed to work from home when I need to," she said.

Drew Weldon described actions taken by his employer, Blue Cross-Blue Shield. "They got me an interpreter for meetings and lectures, and I never even had to ask for a TTY," said Weldon. He said his employer was well-aware of the ADA before she began working there.

Ann Pal is hard of hearing. "The ADA made my employer aware of assistive listening devices," said Pal, a physical therapist. Her employer bought the device, as well as a TTY and a hearing aid-compatible telephone. "Without this equipment, I wouldn't be doing my job today," she said. Another technology Pal likes is close captioned TV. "Now I can understand what my children are watching," she laughed.

Kay Phillips also reported that her employment experience has been favorably affected by the ADA. Several years ago when she returned to work after a severe depressive episode, her employer ignored her doctor's recommendation that changes be made in her work environment. She was told by her employer that if she did not resume her job without modifications, she would be viewed as refusing to work. Recently another depressive episode caused her to miss work. "But this time it was different," she said. "My boss called me at home and explained the ADA to me. They wanted me to come back, and they helped make the changes I needed to work."

Workers with epilepsy have also benefited from the ADA, according to ***Chantelle Sonnier of the Epilepsy Foundation***. "People once thought those with epilepsy can't work," she said. "The ADA has helped make people aware that frequent breaks and modifications in office lighting can help those with epilepsy to perform well in the workplace." And, thanks to the ADA, explained Sonnier, the interview process cannot include questions about seizures.

The ADA has also reduced the barriers that can keep people with disabilities out of certain professions. "Thanks to the ADA and the Alabama Bar Association," said ***Beth Butler***, a young attorney with a visual impairment, "I was able to take the bar exam in a large print version, and I was given extra time." Butler reported that 18 others with disabilities took the bar exam with her, and all were accommodated.

The business community has responded supportively to the ADA, according to some speakers. "Five years ago we couldn't have begged businesses to offer training in disability awareness, but today they're clamoring for it," said ***Peggy Anderson, ADA Coordinator for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services***. "People in business and industry want to implement the ADA, and they want help in recruiting qualified workers." Anderson's agency works with more than 2,500 businesses annually who want to hire or have already hired people with disabilities. "The partnership between business and Rehabilitation Services is really growing," Anderson said.

Access to public accommodations has been one of the most important gains of the ADA, several people said. ***Graham Sisson*** is an attorney who needs access to the court

house in Birmingham. "Thanks to the ADA," he said, "the building is now equipped with a ramp and an automatic door." Sisson, a wheelchair user and the former Alabama ADA Coordinator, also credits the ADA with making restaurants and places of entertainment more accessible. "Restaurant tables are high enough for wheelchairs to go under and are usually spaced correctly," he says, "and movie theaters have removed some seats to make room for wheelchairs."

The University of Alabama at Birmingham accommodated ***Cheryl Bullock's*** love of swimming. "When I repeatedly asked for a wheelchair lift at the campus pool," she said, "I was given every excuse in the book." Finally her request made it to the highest levels of the campus administration where a vice-president's reaction was, "If there's no money for a lift, we'll just have to do without the landscaping." Bullock (and other wheelchair users) got the lift.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Many people with disabilities make daily use of the ADA.

People with disabilities feel empowered, and their self-esteem has improved.

Attitudes among the public have changed a great deal--for the better.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

ALASKA SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 25, 1995

Host organization: Alaska ADA Partners Project

NCD Staff: Billie Jean Hill

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Alaska?

Alaskans gathered at their ADA Town Meeting to tell NCD about the positive changes the ADA has made in their lives. Travel and recreation were the leading categories of beneficial change people addressed, followed by improvements in public accommodations and increased employment opportunities. Getting from airports to hotels before the ADA was an expensive chore for ***Duane French***. "If I wanted to go to a hotel, I had to make special arrangements in advance to find a shuttle bus or van that was equipped with a wheelchair lift," said French. "It cost me $50-$75 just to get to a hotel." But today it is different. "Now most hotels that provide transportation from the airport have a lift-equipped van," French explained.

A state known for its outdoor recreational opportunities, Alaska is also the site of expanded outdoor activities for people with disabilities. ***Natasha Smith***, an Anchorage high school student who uses a wheelchair, described a fishing trip she took last summer on Alaska's Russian River. In Smith's group were several wheelchair users, as well as an individual with a hearing impairment. "We really had fun," Smith recalled. Her group took a ferry across the river, and then fished at the water's edge. "And I was the first person to catch a fish!" she said.

"Two accessible fishing and dock facilities are being built this summer on the Kenai Peninsula," related ***Jim Beck of Alaska ADA Partners Project***. "And it is because of the

ADA that they are being designed to be accessible," he said. Beck also told those present that he knows a man who made his fishing boat accessible. "There were so many people with disabilities who wanted to go out on his boat," said Beck, "that he realized making his vessel accessible meant more business."

The Alaska travel industry is also realizing that accessibility can increase tourism, according to ***Rebecca Campbell of Access Alaska***. She reported that the rail division of a major tour company has just added four new wheelchair lifts to its trains for this year's tourist season.

Businesses of all sorts throughout the state are discovering that accessibility is good for business, explained ***Patrick Reinhart of the state Independent Living Council***. "A lot of businesses have benefited from making their facilities accessible, and that's an impetus for other businesses to make changes as well," he said.

And while many in business are fearful that they will be liable for something they did not even know about 20-30 years ago, "once they understand the ADA, their fears are alleviated," stated ***Mary Elizabeth Rider, a planner for the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education***. "It's a pleasure to see their worry turn to relief when they realize that a ramp will cost them only $200, not $3,000," Rider said.

Indeed, public accommodations of all kinds are being made accessible, said several individuals. The climate of awareness that the ADA has helped to create played a role in the outcome in a lawsuit regarding accessibility of the Alaska Performing Arts Center, explained ***Earl Fullingim, Executive Director of Barrier Free Alaska***. The subject of controversy for more than a decade, the Center offered very little auditorium seating for people in wheelchairs, and that limited seating was all in the back. The judge, said Fullingim, ruled that the Center had to increase the quantity of accessible seating. And furthermore, the accessible seating had to be interspersed throughout the auditorium, not relegated to the back. "The judge wouldn't have made such a ruling if it hadn't been for the ADA," said Fullingim.

Some business owners are eager to do what they can to accommodate customers with disabilities, several said. ***John Woodward*** described his conversations with individual store owners in an Anchorage mall. "All of them agreed that the mall should have an accessible

entrance," stated Woodward. "They said that people with disabilities bring a lot of money into the stores." Besides, "non-disabled people often prefer using ramps to stairs anyway," pointed out ***Rick Tassandore of the Disability Law Center***. Clearly, ramps and curb cuts are better, not only for people with disabilities but for many of the non-disabled as well--parents pushing strollers, bicyclists, people with injuries, and elderly people.

In addition to travel and recreation and public accommodations, the ADA has also made a difference in employment for people with disabilities, several said. "Ten years ago I had to lie about my hearing impairment on job applications," said ***Virginia Cumming of the Alaska Alliance for the Mentally Ill***. "Now I don't have to lie, and I can even get reasonable accommodations."

One woman who missed a month of work as a result of a severe anxiety attack, would not have been taken back by her employer if it were not for the ADA, stated ***Janel Wright of the Disability Law Center of Alaska***. "When we explained the ADA and reasonable accommodation to the employer," said Wright, "they realized they had a responsibility under the ADA." And ***Gretchen Collier, a social service worker***, summed up simply what many people with disabilities have said, "without the ADA I wouldn't have a job."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Service dogs are now allowed in taxis.

The relay service has opened up a whole new world of communication to deaf people.

Outdoor recreational opportunities are expanding for people with disabilities.

Many businesses are seeing that compliance with the ADA means access to customers formerly shut out of their establishments.

Explaining the ADA--its purpose, the minimal nature of most accommodations, and the availability of tax credits for alterations--can usually bring about compliance faster and less expensively than taking legal action.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

ARIZONA SUMMARY REPORT
MAY 6, 1995

Host organization: Arizona Office for Americans with Disabilities

NCD Member: Larry Brown

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Arizona?

Arizonans gathered to let NCD know that the ADA has made a difference in the lives of many people in their state. In employment, travel, public accommodations, and government services, the ADA has had a positive impact. And especially important, according to many, are the growth in empowerment and self-esteem among people with disabilities themselves.

Susan Webb, Executive Director of Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL), described a new employment program her organization has launched. "ABIL is partnering with temporary agencies and employers to place people with disabilities in temporary jobs," she explained. More than 100 individuals have been placed, many of whom have not worked for 25 years. "Employers are more aware that people with disabilities are a really good resource," Webb said, "but I don't believe it would have happened without Title I of the ADA." Webb further explained that her clients are working side by side with non-disabled peers in an integrated, competitive work environment and earning the same wages for the same jobs.

The employment application process has become easier for some people with disabilities, thanks to the ADA. ***Denise Thompson*** commented, in written testimony that "it has been great to have extra time if needed to fill out applications and/or receive the appropriate assistance." Thompson related one instance in which a potential employer

brailled a required test for her. "This type of accommodation would not have happened without the ADA," she wrote.

The ADA is also helping people with disabilities who are already employed to know that they may be eligible for certain accommodations to facilitate their work. ***Michele Martinez***, in charge of implementing the ADA for the city of Phoenix, explained that in the workplace ADA trainings she has done, "numerous employees come up and tell me they have a disability, and that they had no idea that accommodations are available to them under the ADA." They just did without, but now they know what is possible, she explained.

Traveling is much easier for people with disabilities than it was a few years ago. ***Todd Kimball***, who hosts a weekly radio program about disabilities broadcast in several Arizona cities, commented that major strides have been made in long distance travel. "Five years ago people with disabilities couldn't travel across the country," he said. "We were afraid to travel to other cities because we didn't know what we'd find accessible once we got there." But today it is different, Kimball believes. He says that one can usually count on accessible rooms at major hotel chains. "And you can be pretty sure you'll find accessible bus service in other cities too," he said.

Local transportation has improved as well, but much work remains to be done, several said. Some commented that public transportation is sorely lacking in Arizona for non-disbled and disabled people alike, although the ADA has brought improvements. Almost everything was inaccessible, and "people just assumed that was the way it was" explained *Donna Redford*. Redford added that she has seen bus drivers learn to help people with disabilities board the bus safely, while still keeping to their schedule.

Work and transportation are essential parts of life. But leisure activities must not be overlooked in their contribution to a total human life. In Arizona the ADA has helped open sports and recreation to people with disabilities. ***Guerry Dalrymple is the Secretary/Treasurer of the Coalition for the Promotion of Accessible Outdoor Recreation***, and he finds outdoor recreational activities much more accessible than they were before the ADA. "When we do camping trips now, we're not limited to where we can go," he said. "A lot of campgrounds--public and private--have accessible picnic tables and accessible tent pads

and fire rings. And some even have accessible showers and restrooms," he said. Dalrymple can appreciate this access because he remembers making reservations before the ADA and being asked who would be coming along to take care of the "handicapped" people.

Dalrymple's favorite outdoor sport is hunting. "Now when I call a hunting guide service, there's no long pause when I say I have a disability," explains Dalrymple. "Now I hear 'no problem--just tell me what you need.'" Dalrymple also explained that when he goes into a sporting goods store these days he doesn't have to explain that yes he does actually shoot a bow and arrow, rifle, etc. And Dalrymple attributes these changes to the ADA. "The ADA is what we have to thank in the area of recreation," he said. "And it's not because everyone is afraid of being sued. The reason ADA has been successful is that people like me have been empowered by the ADA, and we realize we can go out and do things." Dalrymple believes that attitudes of campground managers, sport store owners, and others have changed because people with disabilities have become a visible presence in a number of outdoor sports.

Other forms of recreation are also becoming more accessible as a result of the ADA. "Theaters are getting better," remarked an unidentified speaker, "and it's because the owners are being educated by people with disabilities who know they have a right to go to the theater and sit with their friends." The speaker related an incident about a woman who got locked into a mall because the movie she was watching ended late, and the only accessible exit from the mall had been locked. A regular door was still unlocked, but she could not access it. The situation was brought to the attention of the mall manager, with the result that when a regular mall door is unlocked, an accessible door is also left unlocked.

While many barriers have been removed in the private sector, local and state governments are also getting rid of barriers. The city of Phoenix gets positive reviews from Donna Redford for its quick action in making curb cuts whenever they hear from a consumer that a cut is needed at a particular site. "Some Arizona communities," she added, "are using their block grant funds to do things like get their parks, restrooms, accessways, and sidewalks accessible, and to make sure they put in curb cuts throughout the city," she explained.

Positive changes are also taking place at the state level. ***Susan Webb*** told the Town Meeting about how the state's discriminatory policy toward drivers with disabilities was altered. "Until recently," Webb began, "a person with a disability who wanted to get a driver's license renewed could be required to take a road test and might even be required to get a doctor's written statement that he or she was qualified to drive." Webb and others with disabilities persuaded their state government that having a disability is different from taking medications. The policy of requiring more of some renewing drivers than others was dropped. "It was the ADA that gave us the tool to represent ourselves in a positive, informed, professional, forthright and successful way," stated Webb. "The ADA works."

One important reason Webb and her group were able to use the ADA so effectively is that it has reshaped the way many people with disabilities feel about themselves. Donna Redford has noticed a change in the calls she gets at the independent living center where she works. "Callers used to tell us to do something about a particular inaccessible site," she said. "Now they call and ask for advice as to what they should do to advocate for themselves!"

While the ADA is reaching many with its hopeful message, and the tangible evidence of the law's success is growing, more work remains to be done to make sure minorities know about and have the opportunity to make use of the Act. ***Michele Martinez*** told NCD that people of color in her area have heard about the ADA, but that many don't know it applies to them. Many Hispanic Americans, she continued, are distrustful of government and consequently are unlikely to seek help in making use of the ADA.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> The ADA has given people with disabilities hope to continue in their job search or to challenge terminations that are based on disability prejudice.
>
> Employers are more receptive to hiring people with disabilities and are more sensitive to employees with disabilities.

People with disabilities are seeing themselves differently--with greater self-esteem and self confidence.

While public transportation in Arizona is very limited for everyone, there have been improvements in paratransit.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

ARKANSAS STATE SUMMARY
FEBRUARY 21, 1995

Host organizations: Arkansas Department of Health/Office of Prevention, Arkansas ADA Roundtable

NCD Member: Mary Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Arkansas?

Those who testified in Little Rock expressed great enthusiasm for the ADA. "The ADA has removed barriers to public transportation, employment, public services, and telecommuni- cations--barriers that have cost us economically and socially," stated ***Dale Kennedy, who has multiple sclerosis and serves on the board of the Arkansas chapter of the National MS Society***.

Improvements in transportation drew praise from a number of speakers. "We had paratransit before the ADA," explained ***Bonnie Johnson of the Arkansas Disability Coalition***, "but it was on a charitable basis, which meant transportation was available only when there was money to fund it." Johnson likes the transportation guidelines established by the ADA, and her group works with Central Arkansas Transit in Little Rock to make sure the system meets the needs of people with disabilities. Now people can use paratransit without first having to declare where they are going, Johnson explained. Before ADA, when service was so limited, people with disabilities were served on a priority basis. In other words, those going shopping or to visit friends could be bumped in favor of someone else making a doctor visit. Since the ADA, Johnson went on, any community that provides public transportation must equally serve people with disabilities who live within the service area.

"We do quarterly customer surveys," said Johnson, "and we hear lots of stories about how people are helped by paratransit.

One of the chief benefits of increased access to transportation is that people with disabilities can get to work. And access to employment has clearly increased since the ADA went into effect. "The ADA is important to me," said ***Anthony Manyard, who works with the Arkansas Disabilities Coalition***, "because it has helped me pursue my career goals." Manyard has a visual impairment and fallen arches.

Reasonable accommodations on the job are also much more readily available than they were before the ADA. One unidentified speaker reported that in the building where he works there was just one accessible bathroom. It was on the first floor, although he worked on the fourth floor." But there was someone else in the building for whom even the first floor bathroom wasn't accessible." He complained, and "then all the bathrooms on all four floors were remodeled for accessibility," the man stated.

Another area where the ADA has made a difference is in people's attitudes. Several commented that public perceptions of people with disabilities have changed greatly for the better. Partly because of this increased awareness, "there are more sports opportunities available to people with disabilities now," said ***John Gould, who works with the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission***. An athlete, Gould suffered a spinal cord injury less than a year ago and now uses a wheelchair. And he plays several sports competitively. "The expanded access to sporting activities for people with disabilities has helped me to deal with my injury," he said. "Because of the ADA, I can lead an independent life."

Not everyone's attitudes have changed, and it is just those whose attitudes have not changed who have brought about a surprising benefit for ***Mike Morrissey***. A writer who uses a wheelchair, Morrissey comments that "the ADA has provided me with literary fodder." He finds it funny that people are amazed when they see him--a wheelchair user--enjoying himself in a restaurant like anyone else or getting into a cab. "I think it's amusing, so I write about people's reactions," he says.

Morrissey also credits the ADA with providing him with legal backing to ask for the modifications he needs to function in society. "The ADA gives me the confidence to know

that if I'm not getting my civil rights, I have somewhere to go." Morrissey added that he has become more assertive since the ADA went into effect.

Several people with hearing impairments told about the impact the ADA has had on their lives. "I was the first hearing impaired juror in Arkansas," said ***Ann Garner*** with pride. In the past, she explained, people with hearing impairments were kept off juries because "an interpreter might distract other jurors." "Before the ADA I often advocated," she said, "but I often got nowhere. With the ADA behind me though, I am much more successful."

Gwen Winston, who is hearing impaired, in addition to having multiple sclerosis, appreciatively explained that hospital stays have been made much easier. "My patient chart says clearly that I am hearing impaired, so my room is always set up with an amplified phone and captioned TV," she said.

An unidentified woman, who had never used the telephone in her life, is excited about the relay service. "Now I can talk on the phone all I want. I can gossip all night with my daughters if I want to," she said. This woman also credits the ADA with helping her to change her life of dependency into one of independence. Since the ADA has been enacted, she told those present, she went back to school, made straight As, and got her degree in deaf education. She plans to go on to graduate school.

Sandra Brent, who walks with braces on both legs, summed up the ADA this way: "The ADA is fantastic. I can go out and participate. The ADA makes me feel like I'm one of the gang."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Many people with disabilities no longer feel like second class citizens.

Many people with disabilities feel empowered and are better able to ask for needed accommodations than they were before the ADA.

Improvements in transportation have been steady and impressive. As a result, many more people are able to get around independently.

Attitudes of non-disabled people toward people with disabilities has improved.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

CALIFORNIA SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 1, 1995

Host organizations: Westside Center for Independent Living and the Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons
NCD Member: Mary Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in California?

Californians spoke with enthusiasm about the ADA. The transportation provisions were the most frequently cited benefit of the law, but people also addressed expanded employment opportunities and the opening up of the world for people with hearing impairments.

Improved public transportation has greatly increased access to a wide variety of activities. "The main way the ADA helps me is in transportation," said ***Sylvia Pryzwiecki***, who uses a wheelchair. "With improved transportation I am able to get out further into the county, to be with my peers, and attend events like this hearing."

"The transportation part of the ADA is changing my life," reports ***Christina Keefer*** of Los Angeles. "I can visit my 88 year old dad, swim, and go to the library, all because of transportation called for in the ADA," she said. Keefer also acknowledges that she would not have been able to accept her position as ***President of the Westside Center for Independent Living*** if it were not for accessible transportation. The changes in transportation that are allowing more people to get out of their homes and into the world are also contributing to the growing public awareness of people with disabilities, Keefer believes.

Armentres Ramsay agrees that the transportation provisions of the ADA are vital. "I'd be lost for a way to get to meetings if the ADA hadn't passed," he said. Ramsay, a wheelchair user, also takes paratransit to shopping and doctors' appointments.

"Because of paratransit I can give back to society by participating in city council meetings," stated ***Pro Se***, who uses a wheelchair. "Paratransit is a blessing," he said, "and I greatly appreciate it."

In written testimony, ***James Ramsey*** stated that the ADA has helped him live a happier, fuller life, partly because of better transportation. "Bus lifts are a great help to me," wrote Ramsey. "I can get around better and do more. I am 63 years old, still active and participating and living a more normal life than I could without the ADA," he wrote.

David Wolf, who serves on a transportation advisory committee in Los Angeles, told those present that the County Board of Supervisors had said that the comprehensive transit/paratransit system being developed would be completed this summer--18 months ahead of schedule. "The ADA gets people to look at populations not adequately served," said Wolf, who is blind.

For most people with disabilities, finding appropriate employment is much more difficult than it is for others. Thanks to the ADA, many Californians said, their opportunity to obtain work for which they qualify has increased. ***Elizabeth Pazdral***, who has cerebral palsy, has been employed for many years. "But it has been much easier since the ADA," she says. As a legal secretary, she needs access to files, and employers have accommodated her by setting up horizontal, rather than vertical, filing cabinets. "Employers are pleased to find that the things I need are very inexpensive," says Pazdral. Pazdral also cited an annual survey of employers conducted by the Cerebral Palsy Foundation. "The Foundation," she said, "has found that most reasonable accommodations cost less than $500." Pazdral believes the employment provisions of the ADA are important because they allow people with disabilities to become financially independent, contributing members of society, rather than the recipients of government funds.

Laura Schultz, who has systemic lupus erythematosis, is a marriage and child counselor. "Employers used to think I was feigning illness," she said. "With the ADA,

though, I've been able to work with my employer to arrange a flexible schedule. If I'm fatigued or ill, I can adjust my hours so I can rest."

Some employers have long been willing to employ people with disabilities. For such companies, the ADA serves as a guidepost in their efforts. ***Tad Childs, Director of IBM's Workforce Diversity Program***, sent a letter to the Town Meeting in which he wrote that the ADA has brought the concept of 'essential functions' to his company's attention. "We wanted to be sure we complied with this landmark legislation," he wrote, and stated that IBM has altered its policies on applicant inquiries and medical exams to comply with the law. Childs also wrote that IBM has developed a comprehensive ADA training program for all its managers, and that all line managers are trained to deal with disabilities on a daily basis. "We hire talented people with skills and potential who happen to have disabilities," Childs wrote. "Full and equal access is at the heart of the ADA."

Not only has the ADA contributed to people's successes in finding employment, but it has provided recourse to people who have been discriminated against in employment. ***Brian Hearn*** is a 30 year old with a lifelong visual impairment. But his impairment did not stop him from working successfully as a heavy equipment operator for years. Even though he was told he had a unique feel for the equipment and was hired for one job over more than 30 other applicants, he was fired when upper management found out about his impairment. Hearn learned about the ADA and filed a complaint against his former employer. "The case is not yet resolved, but the ADA has given me the recourse to fight against being fired unfairly," says Hearn. He describes the ADA as "a ray of hope for many."

The ADA's accessibility requirements in public accommodations and telecommunications have had a significant impact on people with hearing impairments, as a number of Californians described. Senior citizens and many others have benefited from the assisted listening systems now available at the Culver City community center, according to ***Camille Jones, Coordinator of Disability Services for Culver City***. "We get 15-20 requests every day for assisted listening systems from people who attend lectures and participate in groups at the center," said Jones. Jones described a bereavement group at the center, at which some participants had never expressed any emotion. "But once the listening devices

were in use, people cried, gave and sought support, and their participation in the group was transformed," she said. With hearing impairments so common among older people, Jones said, access to listening devices opens up many activities previously denied to seniors.

Grace Tiessen is another hearing-impaired person who has benefited from the ADA. "In 1991 my employer bought an assisted listening device, so I could participate in meetings and workshops," she said. "When they updated the phone system, each telephone was hearing aid-compatible and equipped with volume control," she went on. "Before that I had to bring in my own phone from home, and that was the only one I could use." Tiessen says her social life has improved with the passage of the ADA. "For the first time I can go to movies with friends. And the Pasadena senior center just got FM assisted listening devices, so I plan to start going." Tiessen had never participated in senior center activities before because she couldn't understand what was going on. Tiessen also reported that when she travels, she asks tour guides to wear an FM transmitter, and she wears the receiver, so that she can hear what the guide is describing.

Finally, ***Richard Hester***, whose parents were deaf, expressed great enthusiasm for the ADA. "When my parents were living, there was no relay service or closed captioning," he said. "It's exciting to see that deaf people are able to live independently, thanks to the ADA."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Attitudes are changing toward disabilities, resulting in more respectful treatment of people with disabilities.

Section 504 and other preexisting civil rights laws for people with disabilities are finally being enforced now that the ADA is in effect.

Local and intercity travel have become much more available to people with disabilities.

The ADA provides legal recourse for people with disabilities who are discriminated against in employment.

The relay service has allowed people with hearing impairments to participate in society as never before.

Senior citizens benefit from curb cuts, assisted listening devices, and other changes that the ADA has brought.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

COLORADO SUMMARY REPORT
MAY 26, 1995

Host organization: ADAPT

NCD Staff: Billie Jean Hill

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Colorado?

Colorado residents came to their Town Meeting to tell NCD that the ADA is working for them. It has made a difference in their lives in a variety of ways. Some speakers addressed their improved ability to travel, while others cited better access to employment. The ADA aids in the enforcement of other valuable legislation, and certain communities have made access to all citizens a high priority. Businesses are beginning to open their doors to people with disabilities.

Local transportation is also better, now that the ADA is in effect. Says ***Latanya Reeves***, "The most valuable thing about the ADA to me is that I can get to and from where I want to go on the bus. The ADA means a lot to me." ***Peter Splaine, of the Colorado Cross Disabilities Coalition***, spoke for many when he said, "Now there is a freedom to go places. I applaud the ADA!"

With very high unemployment among people with disabilities, the ADA's employment provisions are hailed by many. Especially valuable in helping people with disabilities to become taxpayers is the 'reasonable accommodation' provision. ***Penny Ford*** commented that a young man with cerebral palsy works in her office. "He makes use of ADAPT's program to make available onsite job supports," she said. "This program allows him to work productively in our office," she said.

The ADA's protections go beyond the specifics spelled out in the legislation. ***Les Reed***, the father of a child with a disability, told a story about another family who used the ADA to win access to a school activity that should not have been denied their child under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). "The ADA can leverage compliance where more traditional remedies under IDEA aren't effective in the school arena," stated Reed.

Several Coloradans spoke about the willingness of certain municipalities to implement the ADA. "Vail has gone far beyond the ADA," explained Mark Simon. He pointed out that Vail is one of the few towns in the state that requires businesses to comply with the ADA in order to get a building permit. Simon cites a large ski operator, Vail Associates, as the impetus behind the city's commitment to access. "This business resisted compliance for a long time," he said, "and then they realized compliance can be profitable. Their policy now," said Simon, "is not to comply with the ADA but to do whatever it takes to serve its customers."

Boulder also was praised for its commitment to access. "The city has really taken accessibility to heart," says ***Bruce Gougen***. "I can pile my three kids onto my wheelchair," he said, "and we go exploring all over the city. Gougen said that when an inaccessible site is brought to the attention of city authorities, "they get on it right away."

The state government has made a very important move toward accessibility. ***Robin Stephens of ADAPT*** told about the request she and others made of the state's lottery commission. They asked that ADA compliance be made a requirement for the more than 2,600 stores in the state that sell lottery tickets. "The commission passed the rule!" she told those assembled.

Indeed, public accommodations of all sorts have become more accessible. Even a relatively small thing like an accessible coffee shop can make a major difference. Latanya Reeves described a newly accessible coffee shop in her neighborhood which now gives her a place, other than her home, where she can meet friends.

Penny Ford described her pleasure, as a mother of a child with cerebral palsy, at being able to take her son to a baseball game at the new Coors Field. "Even when the people

in front of him stood up and blocked his view," she said, "he could still see the field by watching a TV that was mounted nearby." Such places are very welcome, according to Ford, who explained that it is difficult for parents to provide accessible activities in the community that their children with disabilities can enjoy.

Perhaps children's perspectives on disabilities should be taken more into account. ***John Roberts of the Rocky Mountain Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center*** related an experience he had. "I was eating in a Walgreen's restaurant, and the little girl in the next booth kept turning around and staring at me," he said. "Then she walked by me to the bathroom, staring all the while," he said. "On her way back she stopped and asked me what was wrong with me, and I explained that I fell down and broke my back, so I can't walk." Then Roberts heard the girl tell her mother, "See, Mom, I told you there's nothing wrong with him."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

A variety of public accommodations have been made accessible--stores, restaurants, ball fields, airports, and much more.

Transportation has become much more available to people with disabilities--local and long distance travel alike.

Some cities have gone to great lengths to make their services accessible to all citizens.

People without disabilities are much more likely now to treat people with disabilities as human beings.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

CONNECTICUT SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 29, 1995

Host organization: Independence Unlimited, Inc.

NCD Member: Mary Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Connecticut?

Connecticut citizens gathered to recount their successes in using the ADA to gain access to employment, public accommodations, and transportation.

Because the ADA provides for 'reasonable accommodation' in the workplace, many individuals with disabilities have been able to put their skills and talents to work. ***Marcia Smith-Glasper*** is one person who is contributing, thanks to the 'reasonable accommodation' provision. "I'm a minority with a disability and the parent of a child with a disability," says Smith-Glasper, who is also the ***ADA Coordinator at the Connecticut Department of Labor***. Smith-Glasper credits the ADA with making it possible for her to take the time she needs to go to physical therapy to treat her disability. And her 13 year old daughter has sickle cell anemia, "but we didn't know her rights until about two years ago," Smith-Glasper recalls. Smith-Glasper can take time off work if necessary when her daughter is in the hospital. And Smith-Glasper says she looks forward to the day when her daughter goes to work. "By then I expect most employers will know the ADA well and will be accommodating," she said. "I am proud to be an advocate of the ADA."

The 'reasonable accommodation' provision has also been a help to ***Ann Walton***. Walton has diabetes but was at stroke level by the time the disease was diagnosed. "I didn't know I could get reasonable accommodation, so I went to work every day, in spite of my high sugar level and severe weight loss. Now I know my basic rights," she says. At work

Walton is not afraid to say she is tired and needs to shut her office door and rest. "And I can ask my secretary to help me if necessary, without fear of losing my job," said Walton.

Having access to an interpreter in the workplace can make an immeasurable difference to people who are hearing impaired. ***Nan Geissler, of Independence Unlimited, Inc. (IUI),*** told a story about a deaf woman who was concerned that she was not advancing in her company. The woman wanted to meet with her supervisor, along with a representative from IU, with an interpreter present. The supervisor grudgingly agreed, and what came out of the meeting was eye opening for everyone present. It was apparent to Geissler that the woman was not trained well in the use of her equipment and did not know how to apply for another job. "She didn't even realize she had gotten a promotion," said Geissler. "Nor could she communicate well with other workers." When the supervisor realized how much her employee was missing, changes were made to make sure the woman knew about and was part of what was going on in the office. "The situation was resolved well," said Geissler, "but it wouldn't have been if it weren't for the ADA."

No less important than employment is the impact the ADA has had on public accommodations--for the better, according to those who spoke at the Town Meeting. ***Sue LaChance, a peer counselor with the Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut,*** described the success she and others had in getting a shopping area to put in some ramps. Mystic Village, a shopping complex with individual stores designed in an old seafaring motif in keeping with the historic Mystic Seaport nearby, was completely inaccessible. Almost all of the stores in the complex were inaccessible, despite advertising claims that the complex was accessible. "We asked store owners to build ramps, but they wouldn't have anything to do with us," related LaChance. "Even our lawyer got nowhere with the merchants until he cited the ADA," she said. Now Mystic Village is building ramps to all its stores and is making bathrooms accessible as well. "It's nice to finally be able to go to Mystic Village just like anyone else," said LaChance.

Some businesses have been eager to open up to customers with disabilities, several said. ***Juliet Meyer*** praised many store owners in Norwalk for their efforts to offer access to people with disabilities. For example, "the Pepperidge Farm Thrift Store widened its aisles

and put up signs outside that say, 'If you need help, honk and we'll come out and help you.'" Meyer cited several outlet stores that have created accessible fitting rooms for customers.

Access to public telephones for the hard of hearing mean a lot to ***Mark Galucc, Executive Director of the Greater New Haven Disability Rights Activists Center For Independence and Access***. He described a pre-ADA experience that could not happen today. Galucc was driving his car when a torrential rainstorm broke out. The road became flooded, and his car stalled. There was no place to move the car, so he walked to a nearby gas station. "There was no hearing aid-compatible phone and no phone with a volume-raising switch, so I tried to explain my situation to the manager and get him to call my family or the police or a tow truck for me," recounted Galucc. "The owner refused to help. His young assistant even sneaked outside to make the call and was promptly fired," said Galucc. Finally Galucc called his brother and just hoped that his brother was listening. "Today none of that would have happened," said Galucc. "With the ADA I can use a public phone instead of being at the mercy of others in an emergency," he said.

Shirley Krassner described another valuable public accommodation. She knows an elderly deaf man who wanted to attend library board meetings. But he couldn't follow what was being said. The library then installed computer-aided real time reporting, which allows the man, and other deaf persons, to read others' remarks just seconds after they are made.

Barbara Monty, Chair of the Capital Statewide Independent Living Council, told of her long-term effort to ensure that the items in her local grocery store were accessible. Once when she was in the store, she noticed that the dog food, which she buys regularly for her two large dogs, was being moved from the bottom shelf, where she had had no trouble reaching it from her power wheelchair. It was being put into a huge stack, from which cans could only be removed from the top. Monty expressed her need to be able to reach for the cans at chair level, but she was ignored. She kept requesting the cans' location be changed but continued to be ignored. "Finally," she said, "I called the store's central office and explained what the ADA requires. The cans were moved."

No less important than access to public accommodations is the transportation to get to them. And real strides are being made in expanding accessible public transportation. Before paratransit came to her town, ***Lauren Esposito*** had to carefully husband her money for cab fares, limiting trips to only her essential errands. "I was a prisoner in my own home," she said, "so I advocated for paratransit." Esposito wrote articles and letters in the local paper and communicated with local officials. "Then came the news that paratransit would begin. I was so excited!" she said. "And I felt so proud zipping around the stores in my wheelchair making my purchases," she exclaimed.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> Many stores and other businesses have become accessible to people with disabilities.
>
> When people with disabilities advocate for their own needs, those needs are more likely to be met than they were in the pre-ADA years.
>
> The concept of 'reasonable accommodation' has allowed people with disabilities to keep jobs they might have otherwise lost due to their disabilities.
>
> The public is much more receptive to and comfortable with people who have disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

DELAWARE SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 2, 1995

Host organization: Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
NCD Member: Larry Brown

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Delaware?

The ADA has been important in the lives of many of Delaware's citizens, a number of individuals told NCD. Employment was the area most often cited in which important gains have been made. But people also addressed gains in the areas of public accommodation and transportation, as well as the new access enjoyed by people with hearing impairments to a variety of activities that hearing people take for granted.

"Some employers in Delaware go beyond the requirements of the ADA because they find that qualified disabled workers provide a dependable workforce," commented ***Diane Treacy, Executive Director of the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities***. Indeed, ***Peggy Eddens, Vice-President of Human Resources at Mellon Bank*** tells was quoted in a Delaware Department of Labor press release describing people with disabilities as "good workers for Mellon Bank." Mellon Bank was the Governor's Committee's 'Employer of the Year' in 1993.

Treacy cited two examples of individuals with disabilities for whom the ADA has made an important difference. One woman, according to Treacy, had been told by her doctor not to work longer than eight hours at a stretch because of an earlier back injury. But "the employer advised that she must work 12 hour shifts or be terminated," stated Treacy. "She followed the process of a memo and was delighted to retain her job and still stay on an eight hour shift," explained Treacy.

Treacy's other example was a woman who was being asked by her employer to provide justification every time she used medical leave to keep appointments with a therapist. "She presented a memo from a psychiatrist documenting her disability," Treacy explained, "and flexible hours were arranged."

In Treacy's own case, her employer--the state of Delaware--modified a restroom and the fire evacuation process, and also provided designated parking for her.

One speaker, ***Professor Osgood***, related his mentally retarded daughter's positive employment experience. Before the ADA, Osgood explained, her work schedule was reduced, and she was finally fired "because customers gave her a hard time." But now she is successfully employed at a Super 8 motel.

Another way in which the ADA helps people with disabilities in employment is by creating a supportive climate, according to ***Linda Helby, a planner for the Division of Aging and Disability***. "The ADA has led to creative solutions," she said, for keeping qualified employees with disabilities on the job.

When it comes to public accommodations, Delaware citizens with disabilities are better off than they were before the ADA. ***Larry Field, a consultant on ADA building standards***, commented that large companies like Wal-Mart and Dupont are complying with the ADA. He believes that some large companies have found access to be a marketing advantage and cited Exxon's signs at gas stations inviting drivers who need assistance to honk their horn.

Larry Henderson, the director of an independent living center, agrees that larger companies are doing a good job of complying with the ADA. "Supermarkets have become much more accessible to shoppers with disabilities," he observed.

One group who appear to have benefited a great deal from the ADA are the deaf and hard of hearing. ***Loretta Sarro, Coordinator of the Delaware Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation***, related her own personal experiences. Staying overnight at a hotel has become a different experience for Sarro, with the ADA, because she can now request a room with TV close captioning, a special smoke detector, TTY, and a door knock flasher. Now "I can talk with a friend in town or in

another room," she stated in written testimony, "or call for room service at the hotel." Sarro appreciates being able to call first before driving to visit a friend in the area. "I do not have to go down to the front desk for a question," she writes, and "I can be reached at the hotel if there is an emergency."

Sarro is also pleased with the implementation of the relay service. "The telecommunications relay service is a very important priority in my life," she writes, "because I can contact my family, friends, and businesses such as a bank, doctor, etc." Sarro is glad she no longer has to depend on family or friends to use the telephone. Now "I can talk with anyone in my own words."

Transportation has improved since the ADA went into effect. Professor Osgood related that, thanks to improvements in paratransit, his daughter is able to take paratransit to and from her job.

While the ADA has been successful thus far in many areas, one area that clearly needs work is outreach to minorities. According to Larry Henderson, "minorities are not as aware of the ADA as others."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> Many qualified workers with disabilities have been able to remain employed through accommodations that have been very inexpensive.
>
> Many large companies have done a good job of complying with the ADA.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

WASHINGTON, D.C. SUMMARY REPORT
JUNE 5, 1995

Host organization: D.C. Center for Independent Living

NCD Member: Marca Bristo, Yerker Andersson, Mary M. Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Washington, D.C.?

For many Washingtonians, the ADA has meant important and positive changes in their lives. Overwhelmingly, the area of greatest benefit has been transportation, according to speakers at Washington, D.C.'s Town Meeting. Other areas in which the ADA has helped, people said, are employment and services for people with hearing impairments. And a number of individuals addressed intangible benefits from the ADA that are no less important.

"The ADA has enabled me to get out of my house," remarked ***Brunilda Batista***."Metro Access gives me transportation on a daily basis." And ***Tony Rhodes*** agreed that "Metro Access is a very good service." ***Luethel Garrison*** uses Metro Access five days a week. "I am so grateful for Metro Access," she exclaimed.

Angela Vaughn, a client of the D.C. Independent Living Center, used Metro Access to get to the Town Meeting and brought some neighbors along with her. "I ride Metro Access a lot," she said. "It's very important to the handicapped community to have these buses running." Vaughn is happy that, with Metro Access, she can get out by herself to a doctor's appointment, to visit a friend, or do an errand. "I used to have to wait for someone else to offer to take me places," she said.

The Metro train, fixed route buses, and paratransit are all used by ***Jennifer Dodd***, who is blind. "I thank God I'm able to take Metro train and fixed route buses," she said, "but I'm thankful for paratransit. It's good to know it's there when I need it." Independence

is very important to Dodd, and she described her apartment manager who often comments on how independent Dodd is. "I've heard her tell people I'm never home, that I'm always taking the bus somewhere," Dodd added.

Now that summer is here, ***Alfredia Young*** is glad she can take public transportation to swimming and other outdoor activities. Young also commented that she helps Metro Access do its job by calling Metro anytime a driver is unwilling to lower the wheelchair lift for her or treats her rudely.

Improvements in local transportation and long distance travel mean greater access to employment. The ADA also addresses employment by calling for fairness in hiring and 'reasonable accommodations' to enable persons with disabilities to use their abilities in the workplace. "Thanks to the ADA," remarked ***Karen Salva***, "people with disabilities can enter the workforce more easily, and with dignity. The ADA means it's illegal," she added, "for the business sector to reject and discriminate against me because of my physical and speech disabilities." Although not currently employed, Salva looks forward to the day when she has a job and can be economically independent, rather than have to depend on taxpayers' money.

Reasonable accommodations have helped George Aguehounde fulfill his work responsibilities. Because his disability requires him to recline, his employer has secured for him a desk and chair that accommodate this need. His employer, the D.C. Center for Independent Living, also allows him to work at home on rainy or snowy days when getting to work is more difficult than usual.

John O'Rourke of Macfadden & Associates had a chance to educate a corporate manager about reasonable accommodation and the ADA. O'Rourke told the story of sitting in a bar and talking with the man next to him who worked for ITT. The man described an employee with a disability who was not performing up to par. After hearing the details of the situation, O'Rourke was able to suggest some possible accommodations that would be simple and inexpensive, yet would enable the employee to perform satisfactorily. "When we left," O'Rourke recounted, "the man told me, an hour and a half ago I was ready to be in combat with you over the ADA. I'd read about the law and didn't think much of it. But after our discussion, I wonder why I ever thought that way, why I wasn't more perceptive."

Certainly some of the greatest gains resulting from the ADA are those that benefit people with hearing impairments. ***Tom Kober, an advocate for the deaf community from Gallaudet University***, exclaimed that "the relay is wonderful. Thanks to this service, I can call anyone, anywhere, anytime." Kober also credits the ADA with making interpreters more readily available. "The ADA is a real blessing for the deaf community," he said.

In addition to the clear benefits the ADA has brought to people with disabilities, ***Linda Strating*** believes the law paves the way for caregivers to do a better job. Working as an attendant for eight months gave her a fuller perspective of what living with a disability is like, and she is more conscious now of some of the barriers the ADA is removing. "Laws like the ADA are necessary to get us going," she explained, "but they'll be less needed as time goes on."

Gregory Dugan spoke for many when he pronounced that "the ADA has made me feel like a real American!" He cited former President Bush, who signed the ADA into law and stated that "the ADA will bring down the shameful wall of exclusion." And finally, "the ADA is not an ending but a beginning. The ADA means access to a better life," said ***Cornell Mersies***.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Accessible transportation has increased tremendously, and many, many people are grateful for it.

People with disabilities feel more independent than before the ADA because they can get out of their homes more easily.

Many people with disabilities feel a greater sense of dignity and worth than in the past.

Employment is more available to people with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

FLORIDA SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 1, 1995

Host organizations: Abilities of Florida, Business Coalition for Americans with Disabilities, and Metro-Dade Disability Services and Independent Living
NCD Member: Marca Bristo, Chairperson, presided. All NCD members were present.

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Florida?

A diverse group of Floridians spoke out about the difference the ADA has made in their lives. Many have been helped by the ADA in employment, and others spoke of benefits in the areas of public accommodations, and benefits to children, minorities, and farmworkers. Others described the ADA as a valuable tool people with disabilities can use to bring about greater accessibility.

Angelina Rodriguez , Program Director for the nonprofit Spinal Cord Living Assistance Development said "The ADA gives people hope that they can compete in the workplace." Before the ADA was enacted, Rodriguez explained, her organization worked mainly to help people achieve maximum personal independence. "Since the ADA came into law," she said, "we have been helping our clients get into the workforce.

"I never thought I'd be able to get a job," remarked ***Sergio Renden, who works for Metro Dade Disabiltiy Services***. When he came to the United States, he said, he learned about laws and rights, but saw nothing for people with disabilties. "Then the ADA came, and all doors began opening up. I'm grateful for the ADA," he said. "I've had my job for five years and I'm glad to contribute to my community."

Mark Seldon has achieved his career goal in spite of discouragement from others. "When I got my master's degree," said Seldon, "there were people who said I couldn't be a

social worker, that I was unemployable. The ADA helped me believe I could work. Seldon works as a disabilities advocate at a private rehabilitation association.

While the ADA has helped a number of people with disabilities to find satisfying jobs, the Act has also given people an important tool to ensure that their disabilities can be accommodated in the workplace--the reasonable accommodation provision. Before the ADA, related an unidentified man who works for Florida Power and Light, "I had a problem at work getting a door opener and things put low enough so that I could use them." But since the ADA, "the accommodations I need have been easy to obtain, and my employer has been great."

When talking to employers, ***Michael Messer, Executive Director of the Association for Retarded Citizens in Miami***, calls the ADA a "door opener." Messer says that once employers understand the law and what is expected of them, "they are willing to learn what they need to do." Messer believes the ADA is moving more people into jobs and into the community.

While the employment provisions are one of the most important parts of the ADA, the law's call for access in public accommodations has also had a positive impact on many lives. ***Barbara Bernhardt*** reported that since the ADA's passage, she has seen more accessible clothing stores, equipped with accessible fitting rooms. And hotels, she says, are realizing that accessibility means good business. She described one Florida hotel that has made 13 guest rooms accessible. Roll-in showers and a variety of accommodations for people with hearing impairments are available.

Accommodations are also being made in the area of mental health services, explained ***Maggie Fermin***, a counselor for people with hearing impairments. "Before the ADA," she said, "deaf and hard of hearing people had little access to psychologists and psychiatrists." But now, "interpreters are more readily available, and there are some mental health professionals who sign," said Fermin.

The ADA has had a particularly positive impact on certain populations, especially children. Three organizations of parents of children with disabilities were represented at the Town Meeting. One parent, ***Maria Fernandez***, speaking through an interpreter, told those

assembled, "Before the ADA came about, parents of children with disabilities did not know where to turn. Now we are able to get the help our children need."

Another group who have especially benefited from the ADA are Hispanic Americans. ***Angelina Rodriguez*** explained that Hispanic families are likely to view disability as shame on the family, something to keep hidden. But the ADA is helping to dispel that sense, she said, and Hispanic Americans with disabilities are seeking the education and training that will enable them to participate fully in society.

Farmworkers are another group who have benefited from the ADA, according ***to Eduardo Bernones of the Farmworker Training Program for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers***. In reporting his recent efforts to get a grant to help migrant farmworkers with disabilities, Bernones said, "I was amazed to learn that the rate of disability among farmworkers is three times the national average." There are 200,000 migrant farmworkers with disabilities in the U.S., according to Bernones, and 60,000 disabled farmworker dependents. Because of the grant he helped secure, "awareness of the ADA among farmworkers in the area has increased," Bernones said.

One of the greatest impacts of the ADA is that it supports people's efforts to advocate for greater access. ***Jack Humburg, Director of Communications for Abilities of Florida***, told a story about how one family, because they knew the law, were able to get St. Petersburg's Thunder Dome to set aside front row seats on a regular basis for spectators with visual impairments.

Humburg related another story about a deaf woman from Colombia who married an American and moved to the U.S. "He abused her and controlled her," Humburg recounted. The woman left her husband, contacted a deaf services center, and learned her rights as a citizen and a deaf person. She got training and is now working as a secretary. "The ADA gave her motivation," said Humburg. "Without the rights granted through the ADA, she couldn't have broken away and found employment."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

People with disabilities are more able to ask for--and get--access to employment, shopping, and recreation.

There are more assistive technologies available in the workplace.

The number of curb cuts and handicapped parking spaces has grown.

There has been a change in attitude on the part of business owners, employers, and others. They have become much more receptive to making reasonable accommodations.

The attitude of people with disabilities has changed. Many said that now for the first time they see themselves as full citizens with the same rights and responsibilities as other Americans.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

GEORGIA SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 4, 1995

Host organization: Georgia ADA Exchange

NCD Member: Jack Gannon

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Georgia?

Better opportunities for children, greater ease in travel, and improved services of all sorts for people with disabilities were cited by Georgians as important benefits brought about by the ADA.

"My son Daniel has been in Cub Scouts for the last two years, thanks to the ADA," said ***Nancy Duncan***, the mother of a third grader who is blind. She explained that before the ADA, Scouting was closed to children with disabilities. But today he is part of a neighborhood troop with his friends. Other opportunities are opening up for Daniel as well. Last year he attended a city-sponsored day camp, open for the first time to children with disabilities. "And you can't imagine the look on Daniel's face in a restaurant recently when he sat down and read the Braille menu! These changes have only been possible since the ADA," Duncan said.

Playing and watching sports have also become easier for children with disabilities. Until recently, related ***Linda Hawkins***, sports at school were off limits for her son, a 17 year old who uses a wheelchair. "John wanted to participate in weight training, but couldn't get to the field house." Located down a steep gravel hill from the school, the field house was inaccessible for John's wheelchair. But the school agreed to create an accessible path to the field house only after Hawkins studied the ADA and insisted that her son be accommodated.

A new gym is being built at the school, and it is being made accessible. "I couldn't get the school to make accommodations until I had the ADA behind me," Hawkins stated.

Another mother, ***Jill Crow***, told about her 10-year old daughter who loves baseball. But the only way she could attend her brother's games was for three men to carry her and her wheelchair to the ball field. "Once she got there, she was in danger of being hit because there was no place for her wheelchair that was safe from foul balls," said her mother. But thanks to the ADA, the ball field is now accessible. A high fence protects wheelchair users and others, and the gravel and mud that made maneuvering a wheelchair difficult have been replaced with walkways.

The Act has made life better for travelers as well. ***Edrina Clegg*** stated that she has been able to continue her education only because a van equipped with a lift can transport her to school.

Jesse Tyler owes his employment to the improved public transportation the ADA has brought about. Years ago Tyler took the bus to work every day in Atlanta. But after a spinal cord injury it became necessary for him to use a wheelchair, As a result, he had no way to get to work. "Because of the ADA, the city put lifts on the buses, and I became an employed person again," said Tyler. "I spend my money and pay taxes, thanks to an accessible transportation system that wouldn't have occurred without the ADA. Tyler added that he is glad the ADA has helped him get off government support and into productive work.

Improvements in local public transportation got ***Bonnie Bonham*** out of a jam. Bonham, a wheelchair user, was driving on the highway near Atlanta when her van broke down. She called AAA, and "thanks to the fact that Cobb County operates accessible vehicles, they were able to get us and our wheelchairs home," she said. "Without the ADA, Cobb County wouldn't have offered such a service," she said.

Tony Cordova also spoke of the changes ADA has wrought in public transportation. "The ADA has provided me with good public transportation," he said. "The bus comes within a half-block of my home. I use it all the time." Cordova also recounted that as the ADA was working its way through Congress, his local transit authority was trying to decide

whether to purchase some accessible buses. Cordova was part of a citizens' group that persuaded the transit authority to do so.

Improved public transportation has meant a lot to ***Carol Asch***, a Columbus resident who uses a wheelchair. Her city's buses have been equipped with hydraulic lifts, she says, "so I can get out and do things. I'm grateful for the ADA," she said.

"The difference in long distance travel pre-ADA and post-ADA is dramatic!" exclaimed Bonnie Bonham. Last year when she flew to California she was delighted that the shuttle service was accessible and that, with no problem, she could rent an accessible van upon arrival. Travel was far more difficult before the ADA passed, she said.

The improvements in access to Amtrak trains is a result of the ADA, ***Adam Shapiro*** told NCD. "I worked hard for years to get Amtrak to install 'detectable warning' granite strips in its stations," he said, "but it was only after the ADA passed that things started to happen."

In addition to expanding opportunities for children and making travel easier, the ADA has also made many local and state government services more accessible. In Hall County, for example, the public library, the court house, science center, school board building, and even the landfill are being made accessible, according to ***Stephanie Wells, who represents ACCESS-Hall County and the Georgia Library Association***. "Without the ADA, none of the improvements to these facilities would be underway," she told those attending the Town Meeting. The library, she said, is beginning to buy close-captioned films and descriptive videos. "The ADA has made the library system aware of the need to provide services and materials for people with all disabilities," she said.

The Georgia Highway Patrol has also made its services more accessible by installing a TTY. "They have not always had access through the relay," said ***Sandy Marchman***, "and they wanted to make sure deaf people can reach them in an emergency."

In addition to benefiting people with all sorts of disabilities in all sorts of ways, the ADA helps non-disabled individuals as well. ***Liz Patrick, Chair of the Georgia ADA Exchange***, stated two ways in which she benefits. First of all, she could become disabled at any time and would really need the law. And second, "thanks to the ADA, I've gotten to

know some fine people I wouldn't have met if curb cuts, wheelchair lifts, and other improvements hadn't been made that allow people with disabilities to get out in the world," she said.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers.

Transportation improvements have made both intra-city and inter-city travel easier for people with disabilities.

Many businesses are complying with the ADA because they realize that accessibility means good business.

People with hearing impairments can now participate in town meetings and conferences that they could not attend in the past.

Parks and day camps are more accessible, and there are more programs that are inclusive, rather than created specifically for people with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

HAWAII SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 28, 1995

Host organization: Hawaii Centers for Independent Living

NCD Staff: Billie Jean Hill

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Hawaii?

Hawaii residents testified that the ADA has had a positive impact on their lives, especially in the areas of employment, public accommodations, and transportation. Several also stated that the ADA has created a new awareness that has brought its own benefits.

One important thing the ADA has done to make employment more accessible is to call for reasonable accommodations that allow people to perform well on the job. ***Cindy McCoy, Chapter Services Director of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in Honolulu***, explained that she and many of her clients are able to work flex time schedules, thanks to the ADA. "Another accommodation that helps people with MS to remain employed," McCoy said, "is being allowed to work at home."

Michael Tada has also benefited from the ADA's Title I provisions on employment. "When ADA was first introduced," he said, "I got hired at Pizza Hut, after completing my training at Lanakila Crafts." Tada, who has cerebral palsy, added, "I'll do whatever it takes to help ensure that the ADA stays strong."

The ADA has added strength to the efforts of institutions that have long been involved in helping individuals with disabilities find employment. ***Chrissy Zukerkorn***, who does job placement at Goodwill Industries, believes that the ADA has made a difference in her job placement efforts. "Many employers are very receptive," she said.

Michelle Williamson added in a written statement that the ADA "has helped me to understand my rights in getting a job, since I have a disability." The ADA has also given Williamson the courage to talk about her disability, she wrote.

The ADA has made restaurants, conferences, and a wide range of other activities accessible. ***Philip Ana, who works at the Hawaii Centers for Independent Living***, related that he has encountered wheelchair-accessible tables at McDonald's. The tables can be converted, he explained, so that a person in a wheelchair can pull in under the table and sit at it, just as anyone else can.

Ana, who is blind, also commented that public accommodations have become more accessible to people with visual impairments. "I notice now every conference that I attend, the people who are managing the program make sure that there's Braille material available," Ana said.

Thanks to the ADA, ***Lourdes Mugas***, a wheelchair user, successfully advocated for the lowering of public telephones at a major hotel. "The problem is they wanted to accommodate people, but they didn't know how," she said. Mugas referred the hotel to an ADA consultant, and the phones were lowered. The hotel is also creating accessible parking spaces, as a result of Mugas's intervention, she explained.

The next frontier for accessible public accommodations, according to Ana, is the beach. Ana stated that he and another Independent Living Center staff member are working on finding ways to make the beach accessible to people with disabilities!

In addition to public accommodations and employment, important strides are also being made in transportation. JoAnne Bosserdet commented that Honolulu paratransit and the city's accessible buses have "opened up another world for all of the disabled here in Hawaii. "Now the accessible buses will go around the island," she said.

One of the greatest benefits of the ADA is not a concrete one. Many reported that the ADA has increased public awareness and has led to an increase in self-esteem among people with disabilities. ***Michelle Williamson*** believes that, even though the ADA does not address housing, it helped her succeed more quickly in getting her apartment made accessible.

"Because of the ADA," she said, "I think it made it a little bit faster because the landlord understood that things need to be accessible."

Mark Obatake, Executive Director of the Hawaii Centers for Independent Living, summed it up for many when he described the ADA as a civil rights law for people with disabilities. "As a person with a disability looking at the ADA," he said, "more than anything else it has given me personally a sense of validation." He went on to say that even though the spirit of the ADA is not confrontational, it does offer legal recourse in cases where the civil rights of people with disabilities are denied.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

The ADA has expanded work opportunities by calling for reasonable accommodations.

Attitudes of many people, including employers, are changing for the better, in regard to people with disabilities.

Travel, both local and long distance, has become easier for people with disabilities.

The ADA has increased awareness that helps enforce existing laws that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities.

The self-esteem and confidence of people with disabilities is much improved.

A variety of public accommodations have become accessible to people with a variety of disabilities.

People with disabilities now have an effective tool for self-advocacy, and they are using it.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

IDAHO SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 27, 1995

Host organization: Idaho Task Force on the ADA

NCD Member: Kate Wolters

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Idaho?

Citizens gathered in Boise to tell NCD about the positive impacts the ADA has had on their lives. Transportation was the most often cited improvement people said they have experienced as a result of the ADA, but access to outdoor recreation opportunities and other kinds of public accommodations were also noted.

Don Collins told those present that Boise recently acquired 20 new wheelchair lift-equipped buses along with two new paratransit vehicles. "Now I'll be able to get around without having to schedule rides 24 hours in advance," Collins remarked. "It's a real exciting time for folks in Boise. We've been waiting a long time for this," he said. "And the Boise bus system is reorganizing in an attempt to shorten waiting times and develop routes that cover more territory," added ***Roger Howard, Executive Director of the Idaho Task Force on the ADA***.

Sue Harms is another Boise resident who spoke about the improvements in transportation that have resulted from the ADA. Although currently able to drive, Harms spent more than two years unable to drive because of Multiple Sclerosis. "Having the availability of the ACCESS bus to transport me directly to and from my house to medical and other appointments, support group meetings, etc. enabled me to manage my life's commitments and interests without having to rely on family members and other volunteer drivers," she said. Harms also finds the ACCESS fares reasonable. "They fit within my fixed

income which would not be able to stretch to cover taxi costs," she remarked. And now that Harms is driving again, she commented that she welcomes reserved parking spaces for disabled travelers.

Outdoor recreation activities have become much more accessible as a result of the ADA, according to *Roger Howard*. Idahoans with disabilities want more access to picnicking, fishing, camping, and other outdoor recreational activities, reported Howard, who cited a recent study by the Idaho State Independent Living Council which shows that 80% of people with disabilities in Idaho agree or strongly agree that access to recreational opportunities is important.

Since passage of the ADA, Howard explained, "things have begun to change dramatically." The Boise National Forest has made accessibility improvements at a number of campsites--highly used facilities and remote, backcountry sites alike. "In every case," he said, "a majority of the recommended modifications were not only low in cost but easy to accomplish."

Howard offered an example of how, through education, a non-disabled person came to support the campground changes. Most of the improvements had already been made, and Howard was taking photographs to show how little still needed to be done. A nearby camper and long-time user of the campground came over, and the two started talking. "The man said the character and attractions of the campground would be destroyed if it were made accessible. He was surprised when I told him that the modifications had been taking place for four years and were 95% complete." Howard took the camper on a tour of the campground to show him the work that had already been done. "He mentioned that he had noticed the changes, but had just figured they were minor improvements that benefited all users. By the end of the discussion, he was firmly convinced that accessibility improvements had not ruined the campground and was running around trying to find barriers I had missed so they too could be removed!" Howard said. Howard's camper friend illustrates the fact that once people really understand the ADA, they usually support it.

Howard also described efforts by the City of Boise Parks and Recreation Department to make multiple use urban parks as well as small neighborhood parks accessible. "Implementation of this ambitious and cost-effective plan has begun," he said.

In addition to recreational facilities, hotels have also been made more accessible since the ADA. ***Richard Gallaghen***, manager of the hotel in which the Town Meeting was held, spoke briefly. His hotel has made a number of modifications, he explained, in order to be fully accessible to guests with disabilities. "And we've enhanced our business by working with groups like the Idaho Task Force," he said. Gallaghen will be ***president of the Greater Boise Innkeepers Association*** next year, and "I will be urging our members to make their facilities more accessible as well," Gallaghen said.

Day to day community life is more accessible, thanks to the ADA, several said. ***Marcie Dale***, a wheelchair user with cerebral palsy, spoke appreciatively of curb cuts in Boise. "I am thankful for what the Boise community is doing to make it easier for people with disabilities to live independently in the community," she commented.

Another woman, ***Bobby Ball***, a wheelchair user, wanted to be able to visit her children at their school. But she could not, because the school entrance had stairs but no ramp. "For two years I requested that a ramp be built so that I could get into the school," said Ball. The school refused. "Then I found out about the ADA and explained the law to them. "Then the school put in a ramp, and now I can visit my children's school, which I really enjoy. The ADA is a great piece of legislation," she says. Although the ADA does not address education, its passage appears to have made many school systems more aware of their responsibilities under earlier legislation.

In addition to travel, recreation, and public accommodations, the ADA has made a difference in employment to Idahoans. ***Don Collins, who works at the Idaho State Insurance Fund***, stated that before he began his job, he and his employer discussed accommodations he would need. "They got me a voice recognition computer system," said Collins. "Having knowledge of the ADA aided me greatly.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> Local public transportation has become much more accessible for people with disabilities.
>
> The ADA has provided a stimulus to the implementation of earlier civil rights legislation directed at people with disabilities.
>
> Non-disabled people are much more aware of disabilities and receptive to accommodating people with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

ILLINOIS SUMMARY REPORT
JUNE 1, 1995

Host organization: Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities
NCD Member: Marca Bristo

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Illinois?

A large and varied group of individuals gathered at the Illinois Town Meeting to tell NCD that the ADA has meant a great deal to them. In employment, recreation, public accommodation, and transportation, the ADA has made a difference that the people who testified regard as extremely positive.

Illinois residents offered some impressive accounts of increased employment opportunities as a result of the ADA. ***Jo Holzer*** talked about her daughter's employment success. Margaret works at a Hilton Hotel as a reservations clerk. She is also quadriplegic. In her work she puts her computer keyboard on a music stand and uses a headset telephone. "Her work record is excellent," bragged Margaret's mother, "and she's been working there for two years."

Employees with disabilities are not the only ones who benefit from the employment provisions of the ADA. Employers can benefit as well. ***Ann Ford***, who directs an independent living center, hires a number of individuals with disabilities. "We operate on a tight budget," she said, "but no accommodation required by my staff has been costly or prohibitive," she said. Her employees have a variety of disabilities, including mental and emotional problems. "From the standpoint of both an employer and a person with a disability, I'm seeing only positive changes resulting from the ADA," Ford added.

Employers who have no experience hiring people with disabilities are often concerned that the cost of accommodation will be very high. But ***Bill Bisaillon's*** story is typical. Bisaillon, who works at an independent living center in Kankakee, got a call from an employer who wanted to accommodate an employee with a disability but was worried about the cost. Bisaillon surveyed the worksite and concluded that the needed accommodations included: putting the employee's desk on blocks, installing a small, wooden ramp, and changing the way the bathroom door opens. The total cost: less than $50.

While employment is crucial to full participation in life, the importance of recreation must not be overlooked. And the ADA has opened up many recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. ***Beverly Stange-Elliott*** is pleased with what the ADA has brought about for her family. Her daughter has muscular dystrophy, and her town has built a completely accessible park. Accessible equipment was donated by the Lions' Club, and an accessible swim center has been put in. "Now my daughter can play at the park with other kids without feeling left out," explained Stange-Elliott. She also noted that state parks have become much more accessible in the last few years. She described a state park campground that has been made accessible with a raised picnic table, an accessible bathroom, and an asphalt ground surface. "Camping there was a good family experience," Stange-Elliott stated enthusiastically. "We never could go camping before."

A very different type of recreation has also been made accessible. "For the past few years I've taken cruises," said ***Fred Stark, Coordinator of Chicago-ADAPT***. "Facilities are becoming more and more accessible--both the ships and the ports," he said. "Princess Lines are especially accessible," he added.

Even gambling has become an accessible form of recreation! "Casinos like the Grand Victoria in Elgin and the Hollywood Casino in Aurora have accommodations for the disabled individuals!!" wrote ***Connie Duffin*** in testimony she submitted to the Town Meeting.

In addition to recreation, many other types of public accommodations have become more accessible to people with disabilities. Many people would echo ***Father Joseph Mulcrone's*** comment that, "businesses have realized, 'Hey, this is a whole new pool of customers!'"

Certain public accommodations changes are of special benefit to people with visual impairments. ***Ray Campbell*** is happy that he can find Braille menus at some restaurants. "In the last two months I've been to the Outback Steak House, and to Bob Evans," he said. "How nice to be able to read the menu!"

Another individual with a visual impairment arranged to have a bill sent to him in large print. When he got a bill from Nordstrom's that he could not read, "I called the store and told them I would like to get the bill in large print," said ***Jim McGovern, director of an employment project with the Council for Disability Rights***. "They didn't know anything about it, but I said that through the ADA I can legally request a large print bill. And then I was sent a bill I could read," he said.

Some stores and other public accommodations are being made smoke-free, partly in response to people who have envirnmental sensitivities. "Dunkin' Donuts is now smoke-free nationwide," stated ***Theresa Woznicki***. She inquired about the impact of that policy on business and was told, she said, that business is about the same. "The only difference," reported Woznicki, "is that the people who hung around a long time don't linger."

Sometimes access can be had simply by asking for it. ***Edward Bannister, of the Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois***, recalled that he was riding along the street in his motorized cart when he noticed a boy nearby riding in a motorized wheelchair. "His mother was following behind carrying a board," he said. "Whenever he came to a curb, she put the board down to form a ramp for his wheelchair," said Bannister. Then Bannister got together with another advocate and went to the local public works department to ask for a few curb cuts. "They told us we could have as many as we want," said Bannister, "so we had curb cuts put in all over the neighborhood!"

Bannister's 82-year old mother, also a wheelchair user, admires her son's activism. According to Bannister, when he told her about the curb cuts, she asked him, "Where were you when I was growing up?" Bannister believes we need the ADA. "We have a level of respect we've never had before," he added.

Like citizens of many other states, Illinois residents are thankful for transportation improvements the ADA has brought about. "The ADA has had a major impact on

transportation," commented ***Jim Charlton***, a Chicago area leader in transportation access. "The number of accessible buses in the area has increased five-fold," he said.

Even distant Chicago suburbs are doing a good job of providing accessible public transportation, according to ***Susan Firnhaber of the Will County Center for Independent Living***. "The county has fully equipped lift buses," she said. "Accessible transportation allows people with disabilities to be productive and to have gainful employment," she said. "It would have been impossible without the ADA."

One transportation improvement was especially noted by people with visual impairments. ***Karen Bartler*** is very glad that many train stations have installed a detectable warning system. "I feel much safer in stations that have detectable warning," she said.

For one former Chicagoan who came to the Town Meeting, the city has come a long way. "I see a dramatic change in the last five years since Mayor Daley created the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities," remarked ***Michael Conroy***. "Daley was the first big-city mayor to publicly endorse the ADA, and you can tell he is committed to its full implementation. Chicago is now a much more accessible, disability-friendly City."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Many people with disabilities who used to be dependent on others are enjoying their newfound independence.

Once employers realize that most accommodations are very simple and inexpensive, they are willing to hire persons with disabilities.

Retailers and other business owners are realizing that people with disabilities represent a valuable, largely untapped market.

Detectable warnings installed in subway and train stations have been a great help to people who are blind.

It is much easier to find a public TTY than it was a few years ago.

Many people with disabilities report that their self-esteem has improved, and they feel more self-confident since the ADA passed.

More playgrounds are accessible to all children.

Public transportation is much more available to people with disabilities than it was a few years ago.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

INDIANA SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 25, 1995

Host organization: Indiana ADA Steering Committee

NCD Member: Larry Brown

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Indiana?

Hoosiers gathered at their Town Meeting to let NCD know that the ADA is working for them. In the areas of employment, transportation, and public accommodations the ADA is making a difference in their lives. Some noted particular benefits of the law to people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and others pointed out positive impacts of the ADA on people without disabilities.

"Because of the ADA I got a job at a supermarket," commented ***Eve Minton***. "I am so thankful that the ADA exists."

David Vice, a mechanic, feels that he owes his job at a major steel company to the ADA. "I wouldn't be working there if it weren't for the ADA," he said. "The company accommodates me, so I can feed my two children and pay my taxes." Vice, a member of United Steelworkers Local 1010, went on to explain that he works with the union to help the company establish compliance standards to provide adequate accommodations for minimal cost. "We've already accommodated several people who work at the mills," said Vice, "and it hasn't been expensive. In fact, I don't see any costs, except rarely." And, he added, "as a person with a disability, I find ADA one of the best pieces of legislation in recent years."

ADA trainer ***Jodie San Pietro*** pointed out that employers can save money by providing reasonable accommodations for employees who have become disabled. "It's cheaper to work with an employee to accommodate his or her disability," she said, "than to

hire someone else." San Pietro credits the ADA with both saving employers money and with keeping more people with disabilities in the workforce.

The ADA has also made a difference to Indianans in terms of transportation. "Because of the ADA I now have transportation to and from my employment," stated ***Sharon Byrkett*** in written testimony. Before the ADA, she explained, Indianapolis had a very small paratransit system that allowed few riders. "I could get a ride to my job, but could not get a ride home," she explained. Her husband, who also has a disability, had to pick her up every day, even when a work emergency at his own workplace required him to work late. "Now, because of the ADA" she wrote, "I have the RIGHT AND THE RESPONSIBILITY to use public transportation and to make sure that the law is enforced."

Larry Snyder, an ADA consultant, told a surprising story about public transportation in his community of Columbus. In 1992 people with disabilities began asking the Columbus Transit System to use lift-equipped buses. It turned out that ramps had been installed on buses in 1988 during a different administration, "but no one realized they were there because they had never been used," explained Snyder, a wheelchair user. "So the ramps were oiled and they're now in use," he stated. "Now our transportation system is second to none in Indiana!"

Public transportation in Indianapolis has improved dramatically since the ADA's passage, according to ***Karen Vaughn of Vaughn & Associates***. "Our paratransit system provides about 400 rides a day," she said, "well over 300 more per day than before the ADA."

Many of the paratransit rides in Indianapolis and other cities are to public accommodations which, thanks to the ADA, are more likely to be accessible. "The ADA has made it possible for me to enjoy my life," stated ***Rita Renee Gould***, a single mother who has been paraplegic for six years. "I can shop, go to the beauty shop, and do what everyone else does," she stated. One important reason Gould appreciates being able to get around independently is that she does not want her 12-year old son to be burdened by having to push his mother's wheelchair wherever she wants to go. Gould, who is African-American,

believes the ADA is reaching the minority community fairly well but that there are many who still do not understand the extent of the law. "I'm trying to educate," she stated.

While greater access to public accommodations is making life easier and better for people in their own communities, travel is becoming easier as well. One reason for that is the increase in accessible motel and hotel rooms. ***Yo Samson*** described a recent car trip when she and her friend were looking for an accessible place to spend the night. "We had a hard time finding a place," said Samson, a wheelchair user who is also blind, "not because there weren't any accessible accommodations but because they were all in use!" She attributed the rooms' existence to the ADA.

Sometimes access to public accommodations comes only with great effort. In written testimony, ***Suzie Rimstidt*** told NCD that she had to fight to get accessible seating at Indiana University basketball games. Because her disability prevents her from climbing steps, Rimstidt wrote to the Sports Department explaining her situation and requesting seats in the front of the bleachers. "In response, and to my consternation," she wrote, "the Sports Department sent me aisle seats 11 steps up, with no railing or even a wall to hang onto!" Rimstidt then called the Sports Department and was told nothing could be done because all the tickets had been sold. But then when Rimstidt brought up the need to comply with the ADA, "they made far more accessible and safer accommodations for me on a game by game basis."

One group who have particularly benefited from the ADA are the deaf and hard of hearing. ***David Reynolds of the Indiana Deaf School*** brought a group of middle school students to the Town Meeting. They had been learning about the ADA in school and were eager to offer their opinions about the Act.

Johnny Mazurkewicz commented, "I thank the ADA for the state relay service. I can now talk on the phone to anyone I want. It gives me more independence to use the phone." Another student, David Arvey, who goes to the Deaf School half-days and is mainstreamed half-days, thanks the ADA "for mandating interpreters for mainstream students."

Another group of people who benefit from the ADA are people without disabilities. ***Russell Goode***, a wheelchair user, cited a study which showed that more than 90% of

people will walk to a curb cut rather than step off or onto a curb. And ***Alan Spaulding*** pointed out that senior citizens who once saw their disabilities simply as aging are now happy to be able to take advantage of curb cuts, assisted listening devices, and other accommodations that help them participate fully in society. "And people without disabilities appreciate automatic doors," Spaulding said, "if their hands are full and they're trying to get into a building."

As Jodie San Pietro says, "I look at the ADA as an insurance policy. If I become disabled, I'll know that public accommodations, employment, and state and local government programs are still available to me."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Many municipal buildings have been made accessible.

Local transportation for people with disabilities is much better than it was before the ADA.

People with disabilities feel more confident and more hopeful about their future.

People with disabilities are more able to get reasonable accommodations to enable them to use their skills in the workplace.

Many changes that have been made to provide access for people with disabilities have benefited non-disabled people as well.

The relay service has brought people with hearing impairments into the mainstream where they can communicate by phone with anyone without having to have someone else place their calls for them.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

IOWA SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 11, 1995

Host organization: Iowa Commission on Persons with Disabilities

NCD Member: Larry Brown

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Iowa?

When it comes to public accommodations, travel, and services for people with hearing impairments, the ADA has affected Iowans' lives in beneficial ways, many people stated at their ADA Town Meeting. In addition, some said, ADA has fostered a spirit of teamwork among individuals with different disabilities.

"Many businesses are working to comply with the ADA," stated ***Kevin Burt***, who works at ***Iowa City's Independent Living Center***. And Burt finds that newer businesses are more willing to comply than older ones. "The attitude is more receptive among younger businesses," Burt says, "when we show them what they can do to bring in more customers by making their facilities accessible." Burt, an African-American whose father was involved in an earlier civil rights struggle, believes that a barrier to a person with a disability is as discriminatory as a 'whites only' sign in a store window.

Businesses can benefit from complying with the ADA, pointed out one unidentified speaker. She described a gas station that moved its aisles to increase accessibility.

A theater manager in Davenport also found that complying with the ADA increased his business. ***Mike Hanick, director of an advocacy training program at the University of Iowa***, explained that the manager grudgingly installed audio description. "But then the manager noticed there is a market for this tool, and he realized it made sense from a business point of view."

Hanick says that in today's disability-conscious climate, many institutions really want to become accessible. A number of businesses have approached him to learn what they can do to make their facilities accessible. "Even my church," he said, "accommodated me by purchasing Braille prayer books, despite the fact that churches are not covered by the ADA.

Self-advocacy is especially effective when it comes to public accommodations. ***John TenPas*** described his wife's approach to getting stores to move toward accessibility. "My wife was born to shop," he said. "And if she can't get in one store, she'll go to another, and then write a letter to the inaccessible one, telling about all the money she spent elsewhere that she would have spent there if the store had been accessible."

All those who addressed travel agreed that greater access is needed. But many had positive stories to tell as well. One unidentified woman from Cedar Rapids described a program in her city that allows people who cannot drive because of disability to take a taxi to work on a regular basis for only half-fare.

Another kind of travel--the ocean cruise--is a little more accessible these days. "Because of the ADA, I can enjoy my favorite kind of vacation without having to get a physician's release to go on the cruise," said ***Mike Hanick***.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing have benefited greatly from the ADA, several speakers said. "Title IV has had and will have a most profound effect on the deaf," stated ***Janice Hawkins***, the daughter of deaf parents. She describes the change in the lives of deaf people due to the relay service as 'monumental.' Now that deaf people can use the relay to conduct business on their own without help from a hearing person, "I see individuals taking charge of their own lives," said Hawkins.

An advocate, Hawkins observed that deaf people are being given more responsibility on the job, as well as more promotions. "It used to be that deaf people stayed in the same job throughout their careers," said Hawkins, who suffers from later effects of childhood polio and considers the ADA her "life insurance policy."

The needs of hard of hearing people, different from the needs of deaf people, are also being addressed by the ADA, commented ***Jill Robinson, who is hard of hearing and the president of Central Iowa Self-Help for Hard of Hearing***. Robinson explained that since

many hard of hearing people do not sign, they do not benefit from interpreters. "But thanks to the ADA," she said, "assistive listening devices are usually available at meetings, and hospitals have amplified phones and other devices that enable people who are hard of hearing to communicate." Because of the ADA, Robinson explained, the state's court system and Capitol building have been made accessible to hard of hearing people. "Before the ADA, I never saw a public TTY telephone," she said.

Though not a tangible benefit of the ADA, the spirit of unity created among people with different disabilities is not to be overlooked. "Even though programs existed prior to the ADA," stated ***Murlean Hall, the first African-American chairperson of the Governor's Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities***, "there seems to have developed a new sense of unity among participants." ***Dave O'Brien, outreach director at the Central Iowa Independent Living Center***, agrees. "The ADA has created an air of teamwork that's stopped separation of people with different disabilities from each other," he said. "The ADA has bridged the gap among different disabilities toward the greater whole," he added.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

More and more employers are realizing that people with disabilities can make motivated and reliable employees.

Owners of different types of businesses are realizing that accessibility can be good for business.

Communication has opened up for people who are hearing impaired.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

KANSAS SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 15, 1995

Host organization: Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns
NCD Member: Larry Brown

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Kansas?

Speakers at the ADA Town Meeting in Topeka expressed gratitude for the difference ADA has made in their lives--at work, in the community, at home, and in entertainment, recreation, and travel.

"After six years of receiving disability benefits, I am now able to collect a paycheck," ***Michael Todd*** told those present. "ADA has removed barriers to employment, and it feels good once again to be a contributing member of society," stated Todd, a computer lab instructor. "ADA is a wonderful piece of legislation that has allowed many of us to achieve independence," he said.

Avia Cole also attributes her employment to the ADA. When a stroke in 1979 and subsequent complications left her partially paralyzed and unable to read or write, Cole tried unsuccessfully to find work. "After the ADA was passed, I went to a seminar on ADA and employment and got rejuvenated," said Cole. "I began looking again, and within two months I found a job. Now I'm working!"

An artist credits the ADA with enhancing his career. ***Jeri Strange's*** disability makes marketing his paintings difficult, but thanks, Strange says, to increased self-confidence among people with disabilities as a result of the ADA, an organization of artists with disabilities has emerged. The group, ***Art Knows No Bounds***, has helped Strange exhibit his work. Now Strange is a better known artist. He is finding markets for his paintings and is

teaching art. "The ADA presented these opportunities," Strange stated, "to achieve my life goals."

Several speakers spoke about the ADA's requirement of reasonable accommodation in the workplace. ***Alan Post, a Wichita attorney***, has a hearing impairment. Computer-assisted real-time captioning (CART) is an accommodation that has helped him a great deal. With CART, a court reporter types symbols into a computer that can then produce words about two seconds after they are spoken. "There is nothing worse than struggling along in a gathering at the level of 'what did they say' with no time to analyze and react, especially for a lawyer in court," says Post. With CART, Post feels he is much more effective in his work.

While high tech equipment is enabling many people with disabilities to work, reasonable accommodations are more often simple and inexpensive. For example, ***Kenneth Golden, a wheelchair user***, says the main accommodation he needed at work was just a couple of wooden blocks to raise his computer desk so that his wheelchair could fit under it. The cost? Less than $5.

Businesses, professional offices, and entire communities have become much more accessible, thanks to the ADA, several said. ***Ed Herrick***, for example, reported that his local grocery store is getting shopping carts that will hook onto his wheelchair. Others credited stores with making their aisles wide enough for a wheelchair to pass through.

Michelle Campbell, of Salina, told of having to sit at the entrance to a store because her wheelchair could not fit inside. "A clerk or a friend would have to bring items to me," says Campbell. "But now I can get in, and clerks and waitresses ask me what I want instead of asking the person with me what I want!"

Jeff Simon related that in his town of Osborne there was no accessible optometrist. "I advocated with others to make the optometrist's office accessible. It's now being remodeled to comply with the ADA," Simon said. Simon finds that "as a person with a disability, I find the best part of ADA is gaining access to somewhere I've never been before."

Amy Ritter can get around her town of Osage City by herself now, thanks to the ADA. A wheelchair user, Ritter can take advantage of downtown curb cuts and can now avoid having to move her wheelchair through street traffic.

Entertainment and recreation have also become more accessible as a result of the ADA. ***Teresa Rundell***, who has a hearing impairment, enjoys visiting Salina's Community Art Center by using its 'self-directed' audio tours. ***Ed Brungardt*** expressed his pleasure that he can go out to eat with co-workers who use wheelchairs.

Travel has become easier for people with disabilities since the ADA, according to several Kansans. "My husband and I love to travel," says ***Jo Ann Buche***, a wheelchair user. "And since the ADA, attitudes of hotel managers toward accommodating disabilities have improved a great deal."

Sharon Joseph described her pleasure in working with the owner of the White Haven Motor Lodge in Overland Park. The motel was not accessible and Joseph contacted the owner to explain Title III of the ADA. "The owner went way beyond what was readily achievable to make his motel a model of accessibility," said Joseph. "He was an astute business person who was responding to a lethargic market by expanding his customer base to include people with disabilities," she said.

Overall, life for people with disabilities is better with the ADA, summed up ***Brenda Henry***. "Because of the ADA," she said, "I have more of the opportunities that other people have. Now I feel like a participant in life, not a spectator," she said.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> The ADA has dramatically improved employment opportunities. There is less discrimination in hiring, and ADA's 'reasonable accommodation' requirement enables people with disabilities to acquire the tools they need to work.
>
> Some communities, like Lawrence, are doing more than required to comply with ADA. Others are resisting making the changes needed to comply.
>
> The public is much more aware of people with disabilities and their needs than before the ADA.

Businesses are realizing it makes good business sense to make their establishments accessible.

The ADA has allowed many people with disabilities to live independently.

More people with disabilities are working and enjoying being taxpayers rather than receiving government aid.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

KENTUCKY SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 7, 1995

Host organization: Department of Employment Services

NCD Member: Jack Gannon

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Kentucky?

When it comes to employment and transportation, Kentuckians are thankful for the changes the ADA has made in their lives. Speakers also addressed many other changes the ADA has brought--changes that are making people with disabilities part of mainstream, everyday life.

Before the ADA, looking for a job was much harder," stated ***Jerry Wheatley***. "It's not easy now, but it's better" he said. Wheatley believes the ADA has raised the awareness of employers, making them more receptive to hiring people with disabilities.

An unidentified woman commented that with the ADA in effect, she is not asked about her disability when applying for a job. "I thank the ADA for making organizations and businesses aware that they can't discriminate," she added.

Diane Brewer is looking forward to making use of the employment provisions of the ADA. After working as a nurse for 20 years, she became mentally ill and is now learning to live independently again. Eager to get back into the workforce, Brewer believes that everyone has his or her learning style and level, and that "everyone can contribute."

In order to make their contribution in the workplace, people need to be able to get to work, of course. And the availability of accessible public transportation is increasing, as a result of the ADA. ***Roy Siden*** is a Lexington resident who had spent years trying to get wheelchair lifts installed on city buses. "Without the ADA I didn't have a chance," he said. "But now that the ADA is law, lifts are being installed, and I'll be able to get to work and

shopping," he exclaimed. Siden maintains that the transportation provisions of the ADA will reduce the welfare rolls, since more people with disabilities will be able to get to work.

Another provision of the law calls for accessibility to all state and local government services. And Kentucky is working hard to comply, according to ***Sharon Fields, Special Advisor to the Governor on ADA***. Herself legally blind, Fields trains and works with each state agency's ADA coordinator. "All state buildings are being made accessible," she said, "and the tunnel from the state capitol to the annex has been equipped with chair lifts on each flight of steps." State employees are offered sign language classes, and state agencies have access to a Braille printer. "Most of these changes would not have taken place without the ADA," admits Fields.

In addition to opening doors to employment, transportation, and government services, the ADA can also help dispel the prejudice that often prevents people with disabilities from becoming homeowners. ***Danny Carroll*** described his experience in buying a home recently. Because of his mental illness, the lender was reluctant to do business with him. "They wanted to know all about my disability, my diagnosis, and my prognosis, even though I have been taking care of business for 29 years," he said. Carroll hired a lawyer and proceeded to educate the lending agency about mental illness and the ADA. "If it weren't for the ADA, I wouldn't be living in my own house today," he said. Carroll also stressed that the ADA is not about special privileges, but only about extending to people with disabilities the same rights that others enjoy.

By including mental illness and substance abuse problems in the definition of disability, the ADA has paved the way for many to get much needed help. ***Wayne Brock***, of Bowling Green, had been diagnosed for mental illness and substance abuse. "Before the ADA," he said, "substance abuse programs were not paid for by insurance, but now they are." Brock attributes the fact that he has been free of alcohol and drugs for eight months in part to the ADA.

ADA's existence has helped reinforced earlier disability civil rights laws. So, even though the ADA does not address education specifically, accessibility changes that should have been made years ago in education are coming about. ***Mary Ann Westerdale***, for

example, told how her son, thanks in part to the ADA, is now a college freshman at Eastern Kentucky University. Westerdale's son has muscular dystrophy and uses a wheelchair. Now that curb cuts have been made around campus, and buildings are accessible, her son can look forward to getting his degree and becoming a contributing member of society. She also added appreciatively that Richmond, the town in which EKU is located, has become more accessible as well. "My son is no longer an outsider," Westerdale said, "because he can participate in activities both on and off campus, thanks to the ADA."

Another college student, ***Susanne Hoffman of Northern Kentucky University***, credited the ADA with creating a sympathetic climate that allows her to pursue her education. Suffering from a chronic pain disorder, Hoffman finds it impossible to attend all of her classes. When she had problems with instructors who maintained a strict attendance policy, she complained to the university. Thanks to an awareness that she attributes partly to the ADA, the university responded by sending a letter to all faculty members urging them to adopt a flexible attendance policy for students whose disabilities make perfect attendance a hardship. Hoffman also credits the ADA with giving her and others in her community the courage to form an advocacy group to talk to business owners and others in their community about access.

Perhaps the most important benefit of the ADA is that it provides people with disabilities a valuable tool to act on their own to increase accessibility. ***Howard Fuetterer***, who uses a wheelchair, reported that whenever he finds a facility that is inaccessible, he explains the ADA to the building manager and recommends what should be done to make the place accessible. Ramps, curb cuts, and handicapped parking spaces have all been installed as a result of Fuetterer's efforts. But some business owners and building managers ignore his recommendations. "I come back to check on how the changes are going. Once they see that I'm serious about making sure the law is enforced, they usually start making changes," emphasized Fuetterer. He believes that most people want to accommodate people with disabilities when they know what they can do to help.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> The ADA has opened many doors that previously were closed to people with disabilities.
>
> Public awareness about disabilities has grown a great deal.
>
> More people with disabilities now have the courage to advocate for themselves. Some have even organized disability rights advocacy groups.
>
> Employment opportunities for people with disabilities have increased, thanks to improvements in public transportation and changes in the job application process.
>
> Higher education is now more accessible to people with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

LOUISIANA SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 16, 1995

Host organization: University of New Orleans, Division of Public Service Training
NCD Member: Mary Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Louisiana?

Louisianans have had a variety of successes with the ADA. Especially when it comes to public accommodations, many people with disabilities say they see a big difference in Louisiana since the ADA. ***Donna Clark*** praised Jefferson Parish for its enforcement of the use of special parking for people with disabilities. "It makes a difference in where I shop," she says. Certainly businesses that make sure accessible parking is available gain the patronage of people with disabilities.

Public accommodations for people with hearing impairments have improved a great deal since the ADA, ***Lynette Linker*** told those in attendance. Linker recalled a time before the ADA when she was a student at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. Her plane landed at the Baltimore airport, rather than at Washington National, and she could not call her parents because there was no TTY in the airport. But things have changed. Linker then told about a recent trip she took to Seattle for a wedding. Her plane was delayed, but all Linker had to do was go to the airport TTY and phone her friends to make arrangements to be picked up at a later time. "What a relief," sighed Linker. "Life's been easier since the ADA."

New Orleans hotels and motels have also become more accessible as a result of the ADA, according to people who testified. "Hotels are moving to capture this segment of the market," said ***Charles Tubre*** of New Orleans. "And the result? Increased business!" Tubre

went on to say that the fact that many organizations are requiring accessible accommodations when they book major meetings and conferences is adding further economic incentive for hotels to comply with the ADA.

In addition to public accommodations, recreation has also become more accessible to people with disabilities, thanks to the increased consciousness about disabilities that the ADA has brought about. ***Mary LeBlanc, ADA Coordinator for the City of Westwego***, explained that she and the Westwego government are turning 100 acres that were once an airport into an accessible park. Called the WHARF Project (Westwego Handicapped Accessible Recreational Facility), the park will offer a stocked fishing pond. "There will be piers and boat launches that can accommodate wheelchairs," she said, "and near the pond will be an accessible area for cleaning, cooking, and eating fish." There will also be accessible cabins, chartered excursions for people with disabilities and their families, and a sensory botanical garden that people with visual impairments can enjoy. LeBlanc's office is also planning to create an accessible trail from the park to the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, about a mile away.

Louisiana Outdoorsmen with Disabilities Inc President Fleming Trosclair stated that his organization, run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities, is working with the state Parks and Recreation Department to make sporting facilities accessible. "The head of the department is all for it," Trosclair says, "but I tell you, without the ADA, we wouldn't have achieved none of it. The ADA has made authorities aware that we exist. And we're not going away!"

Children with disabilities are also enjoying more opportunities for outdoor recreation, thanks to the ADA. ***Pat Johnson, Director of the Jefferson Parish Office for Citizens with Disabilities***, explained that the publicly-run camps have been opened to all children, non-disabled and disabled alike. "It was scary the first time a disabled kid wanted to go to one of the parish camps, but now all children are welcome at all of our camps," she said.

Some speakers pointed to improvements in employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Pat Johnson has worked with employers and employees to ensure the success of people with disabilities in the workplace. "Sign language interpreters have been provided for

applicants and employees alike," she said, "and a number of other reasonable accommodations have been made to enable people to do their jobs." Through the ADA, Johnson has been able to help several people who have recently become disabled to keep their jobs. "It's better to keep someone in the workforce," she said, "not to hand them a check and have them sit at home."

Overall, people expressed a great deal of appreciation for the fact that the ADA exists. ***Yadi Mark, a wheelchair user who works for the Paralyzed Veterans of America,*** proclaimed that barriers are slowly coming down. "Even though we had the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, it took the ADA to make real change," she said. Mark says she can now expect accessibility in services and lodging. And she put it well when she commented, "The ADA has given me hope, independence, and dignity."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Hotels and motels have recognized that accessibility means more business for them and are making their facilities accessible.

The number and quality of outdoor recreational facilities accessible to people with disabilities have increased dramatically.

Accommodations made for people with hearing impairments have given them independence at work and when traveling.

Education and self-advocacy have proven very effective in making change.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

MAINE SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 16, 1995

Host organization: Alpha One, Center for Independent Living

NCD Member: Bonnie O'Day

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Maine?

Maine residents addressed changes the ADA has made in their lives in such areas as recreation, shopping, travel, and employment. But some also talked about the law as something more. "The ADA has made my life healthier," reported ***Deborah Williams***, who uses a wheelchair. "I firmly believe that the expansion of my opportunities has strengthened my physical body and given me improved health," she says. Williams, who says her life before the ADA did not look very hopeful, now runs her own bookkeeping business.

Other speakers also reported that the ADA has increased their self-confidence, their enjoyment of life, and their hope for the future. "The ADA is a confidence builder," remarked ***Deborah Gardner***.

When it comes to recreation, the ADA has brought many changes. ***Carl Burnett***, a 13 year old who uses a wheelchair, described the difficulty he used to have on the Maine coast during the summer. Just three stairs and an inaccessible bathroom kept him from enjoying the local recreation center with other kids his age. "But a few hundred dollars worth of renovations made the place accessible, and now I can play games there and take a boat out when I want to," said Burnett.

The miniature golf course near Burnett's home has also been made accessible. "A wheelchair user protested the golf course's inaccessibility," said Burnett, "so the owner fully

ramped the place, and my brother had his birthday party there. I could get all around the place," said Burnett.

Thanks to attitudinal changes due at least in part to the ADA, some recreational activities are being made accessible from the outset. ***Laurie Brink***, the mother of a four year old who uses a wheelchair, takes advantage of an accessible indoor play area near her home. "The Discovery Zone is ramped, so my son can play there with his brother." Brink also described a bowling alley her family frequents because it is equipped with a ramp as well as a mechanism to enable wheelchair users to bowl. "It didn't cost much to make the bowling alley accessible," says Brink, "but if it weren't for the ADA, the changes wouldn't have been made."

The number of places that are accessible or in the process of becoming so is growing, commented an unidentified speaker. She cited the Portland Children's Museum, the Portland Civic Center, and seating at Portland Sea Dogs games. She also notices that stores have instituted wider aisles, automatic door openers, and Braille signage. "These changes wouldn't have happened without the ADA," she said.

"Store owners are more aware of boxes and displays that can block the way than they used to be," commented ***Robert Sudheimer***. Sudheimer, who is 73, has relied on personal care attendants for many years, but recently he has been traveling 15,000 miles a year in his volunteer efforts to spread the word about the ADA. Since the ADA's passage, he has noticed signs in stores encouraging shoppers who need help to ask. A deaf woman, ***Jan de Vinney***, noted that "store clerks have become more willing to use a pen and paper to communicate with me."

The ADA is helping to remove barriers to vacation travel. ***Jennifer Eckle of the Northeast ADA Technical Assistance Center*** explained that Maine's hotel industry has become more accepting of service animals. Eckle got a call from a man who had made a hotel reservation. But when he told the owner he was blind and had a service dog, he was told no pets were allowed. Although the man explained that his dog is a worker, not a pet, he got nowhere. But with support from the statewide innkeepers' trade association, the hotel owner was sent information about service animals and the ADA. "Upon learning that the

ADA provides for service animals, the owner turned around completely and welcomed the man and his service dog. Information about the law made the difference, and Eckle is planning an ADA training with the innkeepers' group.

Several speakers commented that the ADA has expanded employment opportunities for people with a range of disabilities. The law is particularly beneficial, however, for people with psychiatric disabilities, according to ***Kim Livingstone of Maine Advocacy Services***. She finds the ADA a useful tool both during the application process and on the job. "With ADA protection," she says, "people don't have to answer questions regarding mental illness." In the past, such questioning usually meant an applicant with a psychiatric disability had to lie or probably not get the job. "The ADA is also a useful tool in helping people with psychiatric disabilities keep their jobs through reasonable accommodation," she said.

An important point was raised about the cost of compliance. In written testimony, ***James Seavey, President of the Savers Federal Credit Union*** in Sankford wrote that he had been unable to fathom the effort and money ADA compliance would entail. But the ramp, widened doors, and accessible teller line recommended by Alpha I cost between $5,000-$7,000. Mr. Seavey wrote that the improvements have brought in new members who had not previously had access and have made access easier for elderly members.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers.

Various forms of recreation are more accessible.

People are much more aware of the needs and rights of those with disabilities.

Merchants are more willing to accommodate customers with disabilities.

People with disabilities are making gains in employment.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

MARYLAND SUMMARY REPORT
MAY 9, 1995

Host organization: Maryland Department of Rehabilitation Services

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Maryland?

Citizens gathered in the Maryland Rehabilitation Center (MRC) to tell their stories about the impacts the ADA has had on their lives. First on most people's list was employment. The ADA has been a boon in the efforts of people with disabilities to find work and succeed on the job.

"I'm very thankful for the ADA," said ***Ronald Baxter***, "for giving me the opportunity to present myself to employers in a positive manner. Baxter has a hidden disability, and he is glad for the protection the ADA provides him against personal, probing questions about his disability. "Instead of focusing on my disability, the interview process can focus on my ability to do the job," Baxter stated.

Rhonda Elsy-Jones, who was once fired for her disability, says that "with the ADA I don't have to answer a job interviewer's questions about my disability. I'm glad I don't have to worry about that anymore," she said.

Joan Ross, an instructor in office technology at the Maryland Rehab Center, has noticed a significant change in the people who are going through MRC's training program these days. "Since the ADA, clients know their rights. The ADA gives them the confidence they need to succeed," she said. And it's a good feeling, she says, when former clients come back to visit as employees. "The ADA works," Ross says. "I've seen it!"

Bonnie Noel, a job developer for Key Point, Inc., says the ADA is making a positive difference in her efforts to help her clients with disabilities find employment. She finds that

employers are increasingly receptive to hiring people with disabilities. "I take my hat off to the ADA," she said.

Once hired, people with disabilities are experiencing success in the workplace. "I like my job," said ***Kerby Hill, who works in the Braille production unit of the Maryland Rehabilitation Center***. Hill, who is blind, thanks former President Bush for signing the ADA into law. "Otherwise it would have been tougher to get a job in my field," Hill said.

"The ADA has made my job more comfortable," said ***Roger Harrison, who works for the Maryland Highway Administration***. Special parking and flexible work hours allow Harrison to fulfill his work role. "It's awfully nice to know the ADA is there when you need it," he said.

Jessica Skintges says that in her work she needs a computer she can talk to. "Employers never bat an eye about getting it for me," she says. And of the ADA, she says, "It's a comfort to know it's there, and that it protects me from discrimination."

David Scott says he owes his job at the Maryland Highway Administration to the ADA and the MRC. "The ADA brought me to realize I could do something with my life and not just be an invalid," he said.

In addition to bringing about important gains in employment for people with disabilities, the ADA has also made public accommodations much more accessible, several speakers said.

Marsha Dryden, who felt she had lost everything after beconing paralyzed from a car accident, now finds much to enjoy. "I want to thank the ADA," she said. "Now I can go out with my children to restaurants and movies. I'm not limited to my home any more." It was her faith and the ADA that made her feel whole again after her accident, Dryden believes.

Robert Moors remembers when his wheelchair-using friend could not ride the bus, go to church, shop, eat out, go to the movies, or even get into his apartment without help. "But since the ADA I can go to the movies with friends in wheelchairs and not be turned away," he said. "The ADA has allowed people with disabilities to participate more fully in life," said Moors.

When he could not get into a major shopping mall in his area, ***Walter Truelove*** asked why there was no automatic door. The answer, not surprisingly, was "no money." Truelove informed the mall manager about the public accommodations title of the ADA, "and three months later there was an automatic door to the mall," said Truelove.

While many, many people with disabilities are benefiting from the ADA today, Linton wisely commented that there will be a clear need in the United States for the ADA in the future as well. "There will always be disabled people to varying degrees," he commented.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

The employment interview process is more fair to people with disabilities than it was in the past because it allows people to focus on what they can do, rather than on present or past disabilities.

Employers are becoming more receptive to hiring people with disabilities.

Through the 'reasonable accommodation' provision of the ADA, many people with disabilities are able to obtain modifications in their work environment and schedule that allow them to work effectively.

People with disabilities feel more confident that they can succeed.

People with disabilities who thought they would never be able to work are now holding down jobs and performing well.

Restaurants, movies, and other social and entertainment activities are more accessible.

Public transportation for people with disabilities has improved.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

MASSACHUSETTS SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 22, 1995

Host organization: Boston Center for Independent Living

NCD Member: Bonnie O'Day

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Massachusetts?

According to Massachusetts residents, the ADA has affected them in many positive ways. ADA has brought about greater access to employment, transportation, and the arts. In addition, people with often overlooked disabilities such as psychiatric disabilities, and chemical sensitivities have also benefited from the law.

To ***Butch Towne's*** employer, his wheelchair is not an issue. Towne reports that his employer, retail chain ***Home Depot***, is committed to complying with the ADA. "I am treated like any other employee," he says, "and whenever I let my supervisor know about barriers at work, they are removed." Towne recalls an occasion when his supervisor saw that Towne could not reach the time clock because a cabinet was in the way. "My supervisor yanked out the cabinet when he realized it blocked my reach," Towne said.

Transportation has also improved as a result of the ADA, people reported. ***Denise Karuth*** is one who benefits from the ADA requirement that private bus companies provide accessible buses for intercity travel. Karuth explained that the ***Intercity Bus Capital Assistance Program***, a Massachusetts public-private partnership, has enabled bus companies to obtain new, wheelchair-accessible buses much more inexpensively than they could get them on the open market. "Most people would not think that a blind person who uses a wheelchair could travel independently, hold a job, and be a taxpayer," says Karuth. "But the

transportation access requirements of the ADA allow me to make my 220 mile commute to Boston from my home in Northampton several times a month."

Local transportation has also improved as a result of the ADA. ***Michael Muehe, Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in Cambridge***, reported that the ***Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority (MBTA)*** has committed to purchasing accessible trolley cars and to making 85 key stations accessible. "And thanks to the ADA's requirement of accessible public transportation," Muehe stated, "the MBTA ended its policy of refusing to allow people with walkers to use the wheelchair lifts in the stations."

The arts too are more accessible, thanks to the ADA, reports ***Charlie Washburn***. Washburn, who is hearing impaired, described the ***Massachusetts Cultural Council's*** ADA minigrant series. The council is making 50 small grants available to arts organizations that make their programs accessible to people with disabilities. Such a program would not have come about, according to Washburn, were it not for the growing public awareness of disabilities that has come about as a result of the ADA.

The ADA recognizes psychiatric disabilities, just as it recognizes a variety of physical disabilities. ***Judi Chamberlin***, who has a psychiatric disability, works with a drop-in and advocacy center run by and for people with psychiatric disabilities. "The ADA is an important law for all of us," she says, "including people with psychiatric disabilities." By including persons with psychiatric problems, the ADA helps remove the stigma of such problems, Chamberlin believes.

Another group most people do not think of when they consider disabilities are those who are chemically sensitive. "Thanks to the ADA and its provision for reasonable accommodation in the workplace, many people with chemical sensitivities are able to remain employed," said ***Jean Lemieux***, whose chemical sensitivity stems from a work-related injury. And because of an increased awareness of disabilities, a conference that dealt with issues of concern to people with chemical sensitivities included several chemically-sensitive speakers who participated through a TV hook-up. The arrangement gave people with chemical sensitivities a chance to educate others.

Pat Dolan is part of a support group for people with multiple chemical sensitivities. "Without the ADA, I wouldn't have been able to find accessible treatment," says Dolan. One hospital's awareness of the need to make health care services accessible allowed Dolan to participate in a program that, she believes, had a tremendously positive effect on her life and health.

Truly, the ADA has made a difference to many people in a number of ways. "I have a disability, and so do my spouse, kids, parents, and sibling," said ***John Winske, Director of the Massachusetts Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities***. He cited many ways in which the ADA has had a positive impact including accessible transportation to work, and signs in stores inviting people with disabilities to ask for help if they need it.

Winske, a Little League coach, also used the ADA to defend his right to be on the field in his wheelchair. After three years of coaching and being accepted by parents and kids alike, he was told by the League president that his wheelchair was not allowed on the field. Winske believed such a rule was a violation of his civil rights under the ADA. He researched case law and found an Arizona case which determined that a person in a wheelchair could be on a playing field.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers.

> Many businesses and citizens are eager to learn about and to help implement the ADA.
>
> The reasonable accommodation requirement in the employment portion of ADA (Title I) has increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

MICHIGAN SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 31, 1995

Host organization: Great Lakes Center for Independent Living and Oakland-Macomb Center for Independent Living
NCD Member: Kate Wolters

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Michigan?

A large and diverse group of Michigan residents gathered to tell their ADA success stories to NCD. People had many positive experiences to report in the area of employment, and many also reported that significant improvements have been made in public accommodations as well. And many citizens testified that overall awareness of and receptivity to persons with disabilities has improved greatly.

Throughout the employment process, things are going better these days for people with disabilities. "Looking for a job is much easier than it was in prior years," stated ***Ann Greco***, who has had a disability for 15 years. "Interviewers are much more careful to ask me only employment-related questions. They don't ask about my disability or how I'm going to get to work," she said.

When ***Mario Elliott*** went to take a typing test as part of a job application process, he had to take the test sitting sideways because his wheelchair would not fit under the typing table. "I failed the test because of my awkward position, but I asked if I could retake the test under better conditions." Elliott's request was granted. He retook the test at a table that can be raised or lowered, and he passed.

Claudia Jones, a vocational counselor for the Michigan Commission for the Blind, agrees that finding a job is easier for people with disabilities now that the ADA is in effect.

"ADA has had an impact on our ability to place people in jobs for which they are competitive," she said. "Employers are expressing a desire to know about what blind people can do and how they do it." Jones explains the assistive technologies available and finds that employers are receptive.

Michelle Rose says she owes her job to the ADA. "But what's even better," she said, "is that once I'm on the job I don't have to be afraid my disability will be discovered." Rose feels she can be honest about her disability, and she has been able to get the accommodation she needs--permission to take vacation days when her disability requires her to rest.

Indeed, getting the word out about the wide range of assistive technologies available today has made a difference in employers' receptivity to hiring persons with disabilities, according to ***Larry Patton***, who works for IBM. Patton runs Tech 2000, a center at which he shows employers and managers various assistive technologies that can help people with different disabilities perform well in the workplace. "When they come in for the half-day course," said Patton, most employers don't know what's available. But once they find out about these assistive technologies, they're more open about hiring people with disabilities. The ADA helps everyone," says Patton.

Several Michigan employers were cited as very willing to comply with the ADA. "At General Motors if you need an accommodation to do your job, it will be provided," said ***Paul Ulrich***, a wheelchair user who has worked at GM for 30 years. Ulrich described a recent new employee, a woman with a bone disorder, who needed a power door to get into the bathroom. "Ten days after her need was made known, the accommodation was made," said Ulrich. And while GM has a history of responsiveness to employees with disabilities, "the ADA has created a positive new atmosphere," he said.

In spite of employers' concerns about the costs of complying with the ADA, compliance actually saves money, according to ***Chuck Roberts. A social worker and a founder of the Michigan Head Injury Alliance***, Roberts told of a 35-year old man who had been out of work for several years because his ankle had been crushed in an accident, and he suffered pain for years afterward. The employer wanted to settle the case by paying the man $30,000. "But we told the company there might be problems with the ADA if they didn't try

to bring him back to work," said Roberts. The man was retrained and went back to work in a different job. In less than two months he was back at his old job with no accommodation needed. "Getting him back on the job cost $18,000," said Roberts, "which means the company saved $12,000, or much more if the man had collected workers' compensation on a permanent disability. The ADA saves companies money," Roberts said.

While employment is a key area covered by the ADA, public accommodations are also important, according to Michigan citizens. ***Willy Brown*** recounted his experience of entering the Mr. Black International Male pageant in Detroit. "They called me and told me to bring a pair of dress shoes to the rehearsal because they were going to teach us guys to glide across the floor." Brown, a wheelchair user, responded that he's been gliding across the floor for years. "But when they saw me," he said, "they said I didn't fit the pageant criteria." Brown, who had a copy of the eligibility criteria with him, read it aloud and found nothing in it about wheelchair users. "I told them about the ADA, and they figured they'd better let me compete. Brown went on to win the pageant.

The ADA gives people with disabilities the power to advocate for accommodations that are readily achievable. Through his own efforts, ***Donald Anderson*** persuaded an Ann Arbor restaurant to put in a ramp and a university auditorium to accommodate his wheelchair. "A lot of times I feel free to advocate because I know I have the law on my side. With the ADA," he said, "I don't have to depend on other people's good intentions.

An unidentified speaker described an experience he had soon after the ADA was enacted. He entered a music store but found the aisles too narrow to accommodate his wheelchair. "I could have gone to another store instead," he said, "but with the ADA in place, I decided to speak up." As a result, the store was remodeled. Racks and displays were moved so that a person in a wheelchair could shop there. "The ADA's a powerful law," the speaker said, "It enables me to speak up and get reasonable accommodations."

Although the ADA has no power over attitudes, they are changing for the better, many speakers said. Churches, for example, are not covered by the ADA, but many are making their facilities accessible anyway. Another unidentified speaker described his experience with his church. At several places in the church--in the front, in the middle, and

in the back--the ends of the pews have been cut to create removable seating. "When I enter the church," said the speaker, a wheelchair user, "I can decide where I want to sit, and the usher will simply unsnap the end of the pew of the area where I want to be."

Nancy Fountain, a student at Baker College, wrote a paper for a government class on the ADA and how it had not been implemented at her college. "The professor took my paper to the administration, and they made the changes I asked for," she said. "They put in cups at the water fountain, installed an accessible door, and more," she said, "all voluntarily."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Attitudes toward people with disabilities are improving. People are becoming more comfortable and helpful.

The job application process is changing, so that qualified applicants cannot be disqualified simply because of a disability.

Employers are becoming more receptive to hiring people with disabilities. They are becoming aware that most accommodations are inexpensive.

Travel is getting easier for people with disabilities. More hotels are accessible.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

MINNESOTA SUMMARY REPORT
MAY 10, 1995

Host organization: Minnesota Council on Disability

NCD Member: Kate Wolters

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Minnesota?

So many Minnesotans wanted to speak about the ADA's impact on their lives that this Town Meeting ran longer than the time allotted. Public accommodations are the area in which the greatest effects of the Act seem to be felt, followed by employment, transportation, and communication.

One public accommodation that has become much more accessible since the ADA is shopping. And perhaps the epitome of disability awareness is the Mall of America. ***Dorothy Balen***, who uses a wheelchair, says she sees a lot of people with disabilities at the Mall. "But what surprised me," she said, "was when I stopped at Sears and a woman in a wheelchair asked if she could help me. She worked there!"

Marjorie Hammargren has been increasing access to shopping and has been having fun doing it. When she was shopping at Dayton's, a Minneapolis department store, "the racks were so close together that I could barely get my wheelchair down the lingerie aisle," she said. Hammargren did manage to get her wheelchair down the aisle, but only after ending up covered in bras, panties, and slips. "When I came into the light, I was in the millinery section," she said, where Hammargren and a saleswoman had a good laugh. Hammargren explained to the saleswoman how difficult it is for wheelchair users to shop when the aisles are so close together and suggested that some merchandise be moved or eliminated, so that the racks could be moved farther apart. "When I went back to Dayton's a

few weeks later," recounted Hammargren, "the millinery section was gone, and the lingerie was more spread out. And it was much easier to shop," she added.

Hammargren also recalled staying in a motel with her sister not long ago. "The owner tried to charge us more because of my wheelchair," she explained. "But my sister said, 'No! You can't! There's a law now!' We didn't pay extra either," exclaimed Hammargren.

The ADA has also made vacation travel easier for 10 year old Freddy Leuchovious and his family. Freddy has spina bifida and uses a motorized wheelchair and sign language. Freddy's mother, ***Deborah Leuchovious*** pointed out that Mystery Cave, a tourist attraction in southeast Minnesota "had been made completely accessible," so now all in her family can enjoy it.

Theater is another public accommodation that is opening up to people with disabilities. ***Eric Peterson***, who is blind, enthusiastically described the state community theater association's first fully accessible festival, held recently. "Access to community theater is important," said Peterson, "because theater is a wonderful way to be part of a community." Peterson concluded his comments by quoting Blanche Dubois of "A Streetcar Named Desire" when she breathed, "I've always depended on the kindness of strangers." "But," added Peterson, "I'm glad I no longer have to depend on the kindness of strangers, thanks to the ADA!"

In addition to theater and other forms of enjoyment, outdoor recreational activities are also becoming more available to people with disabilities. ***Sharon Van Winkle*** described two important changes in her community of Plymouth, an outlying suburb of Minneapolis. Van Winkle, who is paraplegic, is pleased that local ice skating rinks have been made accessible. "The Parks Department plows snow out onto the ice, so we can drive onto it, and then we just get out of the car and enjoy the ice in our wheelchairs," she said. She cited the wonder of experiencing the ice for the first time.

While ice skating is accessible in the winter, Plymouth's beaches are accessible in the summer. The town has made two lakefront beaches accessible by the use of ramps. "Even the water is accessible," Van Winkle explained, "through the use of portable ramps that can be moved according to the height of the water."

While access to recreation, shopping, and other forms of public accommodations is important to a full life, employment is also vital. And the ADA's employment provisions are one of the most important contributions the Act makes to people with disabilities and to employers. Changes in the hiring process brought about by the law have made a big difference to ***Mike Arieta***. "I could present myself and the accommodation I needed to the employer," said Arieta. "It was a chance to open up, and the employer could brainstorm with me regarding how best to accommodate my disability."

People with disabilities make good employees. ***Jim Baxter***, of the state government, explained that 14 of his 46 employees have disabilities. Not only are the 14 disabled employees good workers, but Baxter found that accommodation has been cheap. "The most we have ever spent to accommodate an employee was $1,900," he said. "A much bigger cost is educating managers about the ADA, about attitudes and awareness," Baxter added.

Melissa Beilke, of the Central Minnesota Center for Independent Living, has worked with a number of disabled individuals who have been successfully accommodated. She described the successes of three of them. One, a woman who lost a hand in a non-work related accident, needed several accommodations to return to work--a telephone headset, a modified computer keyboard, and some furniture rearranged in her office, according to Beilke. The woman's employer, a local government, made all the accommodations, "and the woman has been an exemplary employee," explained Beilke.

Next, Beilke described a man who had a stroke-like impairment that made him partially paralyzed and subject to seizures. "But he was able to retain a competitive wage job," said Beilke. The man worked in a bindery, and the accommodations were all simple and cost nothing. "But however simple the accommodations were," she said, "they wouldn't have been provided without the ADA to back them up."

Beilke's third example was a young man whose disability prevented him from reading. He worked in customer service at a grocery store, rounding up shopping carts and bagging groceries. The young man had a job coach with him at work until he felt comfortable performing all the tasks expected of him.

The ADA is a strong resourse when a person with a disability is discriminated against in the hiring process. Beilke described a client of the independent living center who applied for a job cleaning machines in a machine shop. "He was offered the job," she said, "and the employer enthusiastically showed him around the shop. But when my client told him he was taking medication for schizophrenia, the offer was rescinded on the spot." The client sought help from Beilke, who drafted a letter to the employer commenting that his action may have been a violation of the ADA. "Within 48 hours he was offered the job again," she stated.

The city of Rochester also has an accessible public transit system, according to ***Dale Palton of the Southeast Minnesota Center for Independent Living***. In the city's purchase of accessible buses, the ADA provided the leverage that Section 504 could not, Palton explained. "Half of our buses are fully accessible," he said, "and evening and week-end routes also have accessible buses."

Access to public transportation really makes a difference to people. ***Gary Smolik***, a wheelchair user, says he owes his bachelor's and master's degrees in part to accessible public transit.

Communications are another key area of life addressed by the ADA. The relay service, provided under Title IV, is very well-received. ***Michael Zeledon, a customer representative with the Minnesota Relay Service***, commented, "I've been hearing so many success stories from relay users." Zeledon, who is deaf, explained that users often call to express their appreciation for being able to call friends, coworkers, the doctor, anyone, without having to get someone else to do it. "The relay has brought increased freedom, independence, and privacy," stated Zeledon.

Bobbi Cordano, a lawyer who is deaf and who loves to travel, enjoys making use of TTYs in hotel rooms. "My parents are also deaf," she says, "and now I can just pick up the phone on a whim when I'm traveling and give them a call."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Local public transportation is more accessible, and people are using it.

Hotels are much more accessible than they were a few years ago.

All sorts of stores, restaurants, fitness centers, and many other public places have been made accessible.

People in wheelchairs are being seen in retail sales and customer relations roles.

Most workplace accommodations are inexpensive.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

MISSISSIPPI SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 2, 1995

Host organization: Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities

NCD Member: Marca Bristo, Chairperson

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Mississippi?

Mississippians told NCD that the ADA has made a difference in their lives, especially for their children's future, and in education, employment, and entertainment.

One parent, Linda Atwood, has taught her child about the ADA so that he can advocate for himself. ***Linda Atwood, president of the Learning Disabilities Association*** and the mother of a 14-year old who has motor skills problems, says, "My son knows the ADA and his rights, and he can now use the ADA and IDEA to get what he needs at school. Now his future looks good," she said.

Another parent expressed her gratitude for the ADA. "My son and daughter will have the opportunity to choose who they will be," ***Evelyn Williams*** told NCD. Williams and both her children have disabilities, and she says she has made an effort to teach her children about their rights under the ADA. The ADA has opened so many doors that Williams believes her children will have more choices available to them than she herself had. And there is another benefit for Williams. "With the ADA, I finally have a role independent of my husband. I can get into buildings, go grocery shopping, all on my own now," she said.

Lynn Armstrong, the mother of an eight-year old who is deaf, credits the ADA as well as the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) with making it possible for her son to get a good education. "He has had the opportunity to learn to read and become computer literate," said Armstrong. "The world has opened up to him with his ability to

obtain an education, read closed captioning, and gain access to interpreters." This mother went on to say that she does not consider ADA a costly mandate. Rather, she said it is preparing her son to become a taxpaying adult.

Deaf children and their parents benefit from the relay service, guaranteed by the ADA in each state. ***Albert Tusing, principal of a junior-senior high school for deaf students***, praised the relay for allowing them to communicate by telephone with their hearing parents. "The relay makes people more independent," he commented.

Charli Carver and her husband, both of whom are deaf, have also benefited from the ADA. In addition to the relay service, interpreters have been important to them. Carver related an incident in which her husband was given a traffic ticket. When he showed up in court, he told the judge that the ADA guarantees him an interpreter. He was given a second court date, "and an interpreter was there," she said.

Although not deaf himself, ***Mark Palmer*** has benefited from the advances the ADA has offered people with hearing impairments. "I never got to be a child because I always had to interpret for my deaf parents," stated Palmer. He described the pressure he felt growing up having to hear and speak for his parents. In medical situations, with merchants, with the police, on the phone, even when he was sick, he was continually thrust into the adult role of having to take care of his parents' needs. Palmer recounted how difficult it was to make phone calls for his parents. "People often wouldn't respond to me because they knew I was a kid," he said. But today the situation is much improved. Palmer's parents use the relay service, and they watch captioned TV. "I am no longer required to make sure my parents' needs are met because they can do it themselves."

The ADA has made a difference in the area of employment. ***David Courtney*** is proud that he has been working at his job for almost five years. "In May I will celebrate my fifth anniversary of working, and they'll give me a gift because I'm dependable," he said. When Courtney was hired, he had a job coach who worked with him until he could perform proficiently. "I don't have to ask Mom for money because I have a paycheck," he said. "The ADA and IDEA will help other people to get a good education and go to work too," said Courtney.

Donna Smith-Whitty credits the ADA with helping her get reading help and Braille services at work. "A successful person with a disability was once thought of as unusual," she said. "Now successful people with disabilities are the rule, and it's ADA that has opened the door."

Several speakers addressed public accommodations and how they have become more accessible since the ADA was passed. "ADA has transformed the Mississippi Delta Blues Festival!" proclaimed ***John Brown***. Brown, who had been an active participant in the annual festival for years, lost a leg in an accident in 1988. But after that his friends helped him by carrying him into the festival. When Brown called for making the festival accessible to other wheelchair users, he was ignored. He then filed a complaint with the Department of Justice, and since 1993 the festival has been accessible. "That year I saw lots of people in wheelchairs there. When they realized that finally the festival was accessible to them, they showed up," he enthusiastically recalled.

"Because of the ADA, I can more and more enjoy life as a full citizen," remarked ***Kathy Harper***, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. Before the ADA, she could never be sure she would be able to get into public places. "I spent a lot of time waiting in the car or just staying home," she said. Harper credits the ADA with making it possible for her to enjoy going out with her friends.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> The ADA, in combination with the IDEA, have been instrumental in making education and an independent future possible for children with disabilities.
>
> Many people with disabilities feel they are truly citizens for the first time.
>
> People with disabilities are more independent and can rely on their own efforts in a variety of ways.
>
> The telephone relay system has made a difference to many deaf people who no longer have to rely on a hearing person to make and receive phone calls for them.
>
> Movies, concerts, and other forms of entertainment are more accessible now.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

MISSOURI SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 12, 1995

Host organization: Governor's Council on Disability

NCD Member: Jamal Mazrui

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Missouri?

Missourians showed up at their Town Meeting to tell NCD of the many positive effects the ADA has had on their lives. In employment, access to activities in the community, and access to state and local government services, the ADA has been transforming.

The employment provisions of the ADA have helped many people to stay employed. ***Teresa Stutes O'Neal*** told about how the ADA saved her job at a grocery store. O'Neal is manic depressive and takes lithium to keep her condition under control. "But the lithium slows me down," she said. "I was beginning to have customer complaints about how slow I was at the register." O'Neal decided to explain her situation to her employer, who, she said, seemed very dubious. "But I said very calmly to him, 'sir, there's a law. It's called the Americans with Disabilities Act, and it gives me the right to work with proper accommodations.'" O'Neal's employer found that he could use her in the floral department. "I worked very well in that department," said O'Neal. "I'm a creative person, and I could set my own pace. I'm just very thankful for the ADA."

One aspect of the ADA has greatly expanded employment opportunities for people with hearing impairments. ***Leslie Hall***, who is deaf, commented that the relay service helps him a great deal at work because it enables him to use the telephone independently. Hall also noted that he knows a deaf man who runs a bakery. Before the relay, the man usually baked

a few orders a day, depending on the telephone help he was able to get. "Since the relay service started," Hall explained, "this man's orders have increased four times per day!" Hall cited another deaf friend who is a contractor. "He had problems communicating, but with Relay Missouri," Hall said, "things have become more convenient for him and his business is starting to grow."

Another disability group who have benefited from the ADA's employment provisions are people who are HIV-infected. Thanks to the ADA, said ***Terry Starkey of the East Missouri Action Agency***, individuals with HIV do not have to declare their HIV status to employers. "As the life span and wellness years of HIV-infected individuals increases," said Starkey, "we do not need, nor can we afford, nor do infected individuals wish government funding." By helping people with HIV to remain employed as long as possible, the ADA takes a burden off the taxpayers while enhancing the dignity of infected individuals, explained Starkey.

Judith Parker described some unexpected employment gains that resulted from a volunteer program. Parker, who serves as ADA Coordinator for St. Louis County, told those present about Volunteer Plus, a county program that encourages adults with developmental disabilities to volunteer. The individuals involved did so well in learning new skills through volunteering, that some of them are now in competitive employment, she said. Parker described one young man with autism who was working at an animal shelter doing data entry. "He had never held a job," explained Parker, "but within six months his skill level in doing data entry was so high that he is now in competitive employment.

Parker told of another individual, a blind woman who went through Parker's agency's employment training program. "With the help of assistive-listening devices and a voice synthesizer, she is holding her first job in 43 years," Parker explained proudly. Parker attributes the workplace success of many Volunteer Plus participants to the ADA and the more receptive climate it is bringing about in the workplace.

Some employers are very enthusiastic about the ADA. ***Randolph Scott, Vice President of Human Resources at Alliance Blue Cross-Blue Shield***, commented that his company has made its St. Louis facility fully accessible and has hired many individuals with

disabilities. "We had the privilege of being recognized as the Employer of the Year by the Governor's Council last year," Scott said proudly. Scott admitted that many employers are reluctant to commit to hiring people with disabilities because of the cost. But Scott believes "it is far more costly to exclude a portion of the population who can contribute."

While the employment gains that have resulted from the ADA are very important, no less far-reaching have been the increased access to a wide range of commercial, entertainment, and other activities. ***Jim Jordan, who chairs the advisory council for the Missouri Assistive Technology Project,*** is blind. "Before the ADA," said Jordan, "it bothered me a lot that I would go into a restaurant and there were no Braille menus, and I always had to rely on someone else to read to me what they had and how much it cost." He cited Perkins and the Black-Eyed Pea, two Kansas City restaurants that provide Braille menus. "This is very important," he added, "because it gives me independence, and I'm able to choose what I want. I can figure out how much it's going to cost me, so I make sure I have enough money."

Jordan also appreciates automatic tellers that use audio speech, so he knows which buttons he is pushing and can operate the machine independently. "I like those types of things because I'm a very independent person," he said. Jordan cited United Missouri Bank and Boatmen's Bank in Kansas City as banks that are accessible to people with visual impairments. And Jordan is glad that many hotel rooms and public restrooms are now marked in Braille. "The ADA is a very important law," added Jordan. "It makes people's lives a lot more efficient, and it makes people feel good about themselves."

Jim McGarry, a student at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, has also been enjoying greater access in the community. "Since the ADA has passed," he said, "I've seen tremendous changes in curb cuts, in ramps, in access to stores, the aisles in stores." McGarry especially likes going out to movies and restaurants and says he has found them, for the most part, to be in compliance with the ADA.

Missouri's state parks are also becoming more accessible to people with disabilities. ***Jim Crabtree, of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources***, explained that since his department got complaints that several state parks were inaccessible, he and his coworkers

have been working hard to make all its facilities accessible. An ADA advisory committee was formed to work with the Department, and accessibility changes have been made throughout the state's park system. And comments from park users have been positive. One disabled park user who visited Tom Sauk State Park, stopped a staffer to report her excitement at experiencing a high elevation independently for the first time. She was able to reach the highest point in Missouri, located in Tom Sauk State Park.

One of the best things about the ADA, several pointed out, is that you do not have to be disabled to benefit. Although the ADA does not address education, ***Annelle Weymuth, Executive Assistant to the President of Northwest Missouri State University,*** Weymuth believes that ADA's greatest contribution in her area is that it has created "a wonderful awareness" on the Northwest Missouri State campus. Weymuth pointed out that anyone carrying a heavy load can appreciate an automatic door, and that someone temporarily on crutches can appreciate being able to park a little closer to buildings until they get off crutches.

In addition to leading to the accessibility of a variety of facilities and activities in the community, the ADA has also increased access to local and state government services. ***Mary Branham***, who has cerebral palsy, finds steps impossible. But since her county courthouse was made accessible last year, "I was able to register to vote for the first time," she said, "and that is a privilege that most people take for granted."

Some local governments are going the extra mile to make their programs accessible to all residents. Park Hills even received an award of $1,500 from the National Organization on Disability for its accessibility efforts, according to ***John Simmons, Park Hills's ADA Coordinator.***

Jim Tuscher of Paraquad, Inc., a St. Louis independent living center, recalled that in the years before ADA when he went to the state capitol building in Jefferson City on business, he had to drive the 100-plus miles to Jefferson City, do his business, and drive back to St. Louis, all without using the bathroom because there were no accessible bathrooms in the state capitol. "That is all history because of the ADA," Tuscher exclaimed. And he added, "the ADA is working. In fact, it's working darn well in Missouri!"

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Without the ADA, many people with disabilities who are employed would not be.

Training programs for people with disabilities have led to success in competitive employment.

People with hearing impairments are finding more success in employment and are getting more promotions.

A variety of commercial, entertainment, and recreational facilities are now accessible.

People with disabilities have made gains in motivation and self-esteem.

Local and state government programs and facilities have become much more accessible.

Transportation has become more accessible to persons with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

MONTANA SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 13, 1995

Host organization: Alliance for Disability and the Students of Montana

NCD Member: Kate Wolters

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Montana?

Montana held its Town Meeting in the form of a teleconference. Based in Missoula, the teleconference allowed for the direct participation of people in Billings, Great Falls, Helena, and Kalispell as well. Montana residents expressed appreciation for the ADA, for the changes it has brought about in many areas. Attitude was the most often cited difference the ADA has made, followed by expanded opportunities in employment, and access to public accommodations, transportation, and state and local services. The ADA, some said, has also been a tool in the implementation of earlier disability civil rights laws.

Attitude changes have been a two-way street. Speakers commented that their own attitudes about themselves are more positive, and the attitudes of others toward them have improved as well. For ***David Donaldson, a student at the University of Montana***, the ADA has given him a feeling of equality. "I'm not ashamed of who I am," said Donaldson, who is blind as a result of albinism. "The ADA helps me to appreciate myself and others more." Donaldson also feels that others have treated him better in the last few years.

Fred Reed, a professor at the University of Montana, and faculty advisor to the Alliance, maintains that the ADA has brought real changes in the attitudes of people with disabilities. "The ADA," he says, "has certified that people with disabilities should ask for accommodation when they need it. "And students have pulled me up short about my own

insensitivity to disabilities," Reed added. "That would never have happened before the ADA!"

A dramatic example of an attitude shift was described by ***Randy Modrel, Co-coordinator of an independent living center in Kalispell***. Modrel explained that the local access committee, formed to work with the city government for greater access, invited the public works director to join the group. "He opposed the ADA," said Modrel, "and saw it as interfering with his job." But Modrel and others educated the man about the importance of access and the requirements of the ADA. As a result, the public works director installead curb cuts and parking for people with disabilities. Modrel added that when a new medical office was being built, this former ADA opponent refused to grant a building permit until the builder agreed to build the parking lot at a 1% grade rather than 2%, in order to make it more accessible to wheelchairs.

One of the most important contributions of the ADA is in the area of employment. "The ADA has made it possible for me to maintain my job in a university setting," explained ***Kristie Madsen, a learning disabilities specialist at the University of Montana***. She believes that the ADA is helping people with disabilities to go beyond entry level jobs to obtain professional positions as well.

While employment opportunities have improved as a result of the Act, there is still progress to be made, several said. "It's become a little easier for me to interview and get a job since the ADA," stated ***Rick Love, who works for the Montana Department of Labor and Industry***. "Employers and companies are more aware since the ADA," he added.

More government agencies are hiring people with disabilities, commented ***Michael Regnier, who works at the independent living center in Missoula***. "We've seen some increase in employment opportunities for people with disabilities, as well as better training programs," he said.

Perhaps the most diverse improvements can be seen in the area of public accommodations. ***Joe Tadisko, of the independent living center in Billings***, reported his success in working with Metro Park, a large facility where rodeos and other major events are held. "Metro Park," he said, "has bent over backward to make the place accessible. They put

in extra wheelchair seating and made other changes to make the facility accessible," he said. And when the Northwest Fair Owners Association met there, Tadisko explained, he was invited to speak, to tell fair owners from all over the northwest what they need to do to make their fairs accessible. "We were even given a regular column in the Association's newsletter, so that we can discuss access on an ongoing basis," Tadisko said.

As spectator events and fairs are becoming more accessible, so are more simple, everyday activities. A woman identified only as Charla said that getting around is a lot easier today than it was before the ADA. "Ten years ago there were no curb cuts," she commented, "so it was impossible even to go downtown by myself." "The ADA is great!" she said enthusiastically.

Another type of public accommodation that has become more accessible is the church. Although not obligated by the ADA, many churches have been trying, nonetheless, to make their services and other activities accessible. "I'm impressed by the number of churches doing surveys and making changes for access," stated an unidentified woman who works at an independent living center. She remarked that she has gotten a lot of calls from churches for information on increasing accessibility.

Of course in order to get to the various accessible public accommodations or to the workplace, transportation is needed. And the ADA has made great strides in that area, some said. "One thing I'm impressed with is transportation service in Great Falls," said ***Brian Tawher of the independent living center in Great Falls***. "The bus routes take a little longer," he said, "but bus service is available throughout the city." Tawher explained that the city has contracted with a taxi company to fill the paratransit role. "I use it myself," said Tawher.

Joe Herrington is another fan of the transportation improvements the ADA has brought. "Public transportation now isn't perfect, but it's better than before," commented Harrington, an ADA consultant. "I'm grateful for the transportation provisions in the law," he said.

In addition to affecting employment, public accommodations, and transportation, the ADA has also impacted state and local governments. Diane Carroll, of Kalispell, is pleased

with the progress her city is making in creating accessible services. "The city hall is being made accessible," she said, "and so are the art center, swimming pool, picnic areas, and park." Cooperation has been great, she said. "In fact, city hall employees willingly went without bathrooms for several weeks while the renovations were being made!" she said.

In addition to its impact on many facets of life, the ADA has also affected prior legislation. Jim Marks, the Director of Disability Services at the University of Montana, explained that the ADA has given teeth to an existing state law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. Marks, who is blind, had applied for teaching positions but had been told that he was too expensive because of the fees required for readers. "I filed a complaint under the state law, but the law turned out to be meaningless because it did not define disability." Then the legislature passed a law to adopt the ADA's definition of disability, Marks explained. "Now the state law has meaning."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> We have a long way to go in making public transportation accessible, but the changes made in recent years have made a world of difference.
>
> Attitudes about disability have changed for the better, both among people with disabilities and among people without them.
>
> A wide variety of public accommodations have become more accessible.
>
> Existing disability civil rights legislation has been strengthened as a result of the passage of ADA.
>
> Employment has opened up for people with disabilities.
>
> State and local governments are making their services more accessible to people with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

NEBRASKA SUMMARY REPORT
MAY 9, 1995

Host organization: League of Human Dignity

NCD Member: Rae Unziker

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Nebraska?

Nebraskans spoke enthusiastically about the ADA. They emphasized a variety of gains--in public accommodations, in employment, in accessibility to government services, in transportation, and in communications.

A wide range of public buildings have become accessible to people with disabilities as a result of the ADA, according to many who spoke. People really do participate more in community activities when public accommodations are accessible, maintains ***Ken Mayberry***. He cited a facility in York that has been made accessible. "I recently noticed four people in wheelchairs watching a basketball game there," he said.

One business owner indirectly told NCD that the renovations he undertook to make his business accessible cost less than he expected. In a video presented by ***Sara Fleck of the League on Human Dignity***, this individual remarked that he is proud to comply with the ADA. "The changes were easy to make," he said, "and I am pleased that my friend who uses a wheelchair can now come into my store."

Although exempt from ADA requirements, "many churches are widening doors, installing ramps and sound systems that aid the hearing impaired, and making bathrooms accessible," observed ***Charles Beardslee*** with the Nebraska Assistive Technology Program. He maintains that the accessibility changes taking place as a result of the ADA in other areas of society "are making churches examine themselves." Beardslee also pointed out that,

without accessibility changes, attendance at church functions is often low because some people can't get in the door or can't hear what is being said.

Accessibility in the workplace is also vitally important. Sarah Fleck, in her video, introduced the audience to two individuals with disabilities, along with their employers. One employee, ***Kathy Soflin***, operates a telephone switchboard at Seward Motor Freight. In terms of accommodation, very little is required, and Saflin's supervisor is happy with her work. He said "The cost of the accommodations we made for Kathy didn't really have an impact. They are just tools to do her job," he explained, "and we provide all our employees with the tools they need to do their jobs."

Fleck also visited ***Paul Heers***, an employee at a Wal-Mart store, and interviewed him, along with his job coach and supervisor. Again, accommodations have been minimal. Heers, who does outdoor work, is supplied with a long handled broom, since stooping is difficult for him, as well as a walkie-talkie, so that he and his supervisor can communicate when he is working outside. Heers' job coach explained that Heers' is included in all staff meetings, parties, and other activities. "Paul is a good worker," said his boss. "And accommodating him hasn't taken much. It's been very economical and worthwhile to have him on the staff," he said.

One individual who is very happy to be employed is ***Mark Booth***. Until three months ago he had been unemployed, "but now I have a job, thanks to the ADA, and I have a lot of work," he said. Mark was happy to trade his subsidized housing and food stamps for his job.

Robert Doulas explained how the ADA aided him in his search for employment. "When I applied for a job with the state," reported Doulas, who is blind, "I was told I had to fill out an application." But Doulas knew that, thanks to the ADA, he could submit a resume instead, and the application details could be filled in by a staffperson. "The ADA got me clerical help in filling out the application," said Doulas.

While employment is essential for most people's survival, access to one's government offices and services is essential to citizenship. And local and state government offices in Nebraska are working hard to ensure that all citizens have access to the services government

provides. ***Dwain McLaughlin, ADA Coordinator for Scottsbluff***, stated in a letter that the city council voted to make accessibility changes even faster than the ADA peer group had recommended. "We set out to implement the transition process over a two-year period," McLaughlin wrote, but the city council "decided to earmark funds for completing this major project by allocating the entire amount for one budget season."

The ADA has also enabled the state of Nebraska to change a discriminatory policy. Until recently any driver who had lost consciousness in the last year as a result of epilepsy could have his or her driver's license revoked for a year. But, according to ***Jack Conrad, ADA Coordinator for the state***, "we decided to examine such policies to determine whether they were appropriate. "We sought expert information and advice," he said, "and the policy has been changed to just a three month revocation."

At the state capitol in Lincoln, disability advocates worked effectively with the state government to expand parking for people with disabilities. ***Merwyn Vavrina***, a citizen who participates in legislative issues, found the four existing spaces inadequate. He met with Nebraska's ADA Coordinator and representatives of several state government bodies that use the parking spaces near the capitol building, and the result? "Now there are five handicapped spaces in the area where there had been four, and an additional area of handicapped parking will be created on another side of the building," he said. Vavrina added that "the ADA played a big part in this coming about."

For those who do not drive, public transportation is a must if they are to participate fully in their community. ***William L. Rush***, a free lance writer in Lincoln, who uses a wheelchair, explained that before the ADA he was limited to places he could get to in a few-block radius. "But now I can go farther," he stated through an electronic device, "thanks to lift-equipped buses." Rush, who needs to be able to meet with individuals on a spur-of-the moment basis for his writing, found the earlier paratransit requirement that a transportation reservation must be made two weeks in advance entirely inadequate and is glad for the change.

The improved transportation that has resulted from the ADA also plays an important role in Rush's social life. "Now I can meet my girlfriend at K-Mart to shop or meet my church men's group at a restaurant," he says.

Increased opportunities to communicate with other people is a major benefit of the ADA. ***Norman Weverka, a field representative for the Nebraska Commission for the Hearing Impaired***, explained what a remarkable change it is in the lives of people with hearing impairments to be able to pick up a telephone and call anyone, hearing or non-hearing. "People can be more independent," he said, "now that they can make phone calls without help." Weverka also believes the relay is educating people by dramatically increasing the contact between people who are hearing impaired and those who are not.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

As accessibility changes have been made, people have noticed more people with disabilities attending performances and other events.

More municipal buildings and activities are fully accessible.

Attitudes toward people with disabilities have become much more accepting and accommodating.

Efforts people with disabilities make to increase accessibility are no longer brushed off, as they often were in the pre-ADA years.

Access to employment has increased significantly for people with disabilities.

A number of parks have been made accessible.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

NEVADA SUMMARY REPORT
MAY 3, 1995

Host organization: Nevada Rehabilitation Division/Community Based Services

NCD Member: Jack Gannon

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Nevada?

More than 100 Nevadans turned out for their ADA Town Meeting, and many had a lot to say about the law's positive impacts on their lives. In employment and public accommodations the ADA has made a big difference, many people said. Others spoke about the ways in which the ADA has benefited those with mental illness, and still others addressed the law's cost.

"How has the ADA affected my life?" asked ***Paul Gowens***. "I got out of bed this morning and went to work. It wouldn't have happened without the ADA." Gowens, a former Council on Independent Living Chair, believes that in exchange for the right to work, to own a home, and other rights he gained through the ADA, that he has a responsibility to contribute to society as well.

Dana Lescher is a young woman who does not really mind paying taxes because she is happy to be working. A wheelchair user, Lescher recently graduated from a public high school and is now employed at a Disney store in Las Vegas. "I couldn't have gotten my job if it weren't for the ADA," Lescher said.

One mother is especially grateful that her daughter is able to remain employed in spite of the fact that she has AIDS. "Research shows that the longer people with AIDS can remain

employed, the longer they live," explained ***Diane Randall***, the woman's mother. Randall expressed her great appreciation for the ADA.

The ADA has closed gaps in the law regarding employment protections for people with disabilities, explained ***Scott Youngs, Project Coordinator for ADA Nevada***. "The ADA has brought a national focus to the need to remove barriers that stand in the way of employment for people with disabilities," he said.

Randy Tower, a technology specialist at the Nevada Community Enrichment Program, has been an employed person with a disability before and after passage of the ADA. When he went back to work 25 years ago after becoming disabled in a car accident, he found an inaccessible, difficult work environment. He suffered a great deal of stress and decided he could not really work after all. "But as the disability rights movement has grown and the ADA was passed, I'm now employed in a friendly workplace," he says. "And I can be comfortable at work."

While employment discrimination against people with disabilities still exists, there is now legal recourse to deal with it, thanks to the ADA. ***Teresa Fuller*** told those assembled that her husband Ernie, in applying for a job, had gotten the highest scores, both in a written and an oral test. "But he wasn't hired because of his hearing impairment," she said. So Fuller's husband filed charges. "He won the case, and he got the job," she said. "It wouldn't have been possible before the ADA."

While strides toward equal access in employment have been great under the ADA, strides in public accommodations have been impressive as well. ***June Tweedle*** told a story about her son, a young man with cerebral palsy who is ambulatory. When he went to a local carnival with his sisters two years ago, he was denied access to the rides because of his disability. His mother was angry that other people would attempt to put limits on his activities, since he is the best judge of what he can and cannot do. "I tried to talk to the carnival owner, but he told me he didn't want to hear about anyone's civil rights," said Tweedle, who then decided to file a civil rights violation.

The following year, Tweedle said, her son had no problems gaining access to the rides at the carnival. "Of course he was accompanied by two attorneys," she said. But this

year Tweedle noticed that some real changes had been made at the carnival. "Thanks to the ADA, the fairgrounds had been made much more accessible, and I saw more people there in wheelchairs than I had seen in the last four years," remarked Tweedle.

Another speaker told about his successful efforts to turn a reasonably accessible facility into a completely accessible one. ***Bill Hamilton***, a swimmer who uses a wheelchair, moved to Minden, in part because of the Carson Valley Swim Center, an accessible swimming pool complex. Built in 1989, the Center was in compliance with the laws at the time. "But it was not in compliance with the ADA," pointed out Hamilton. "The pool manager wanted to renovate, and the alterations they made created a facility that exceeded the ADA!" Improvements included: a new shower room that was large enough for a wheelchair and an attendant; and a private, unisex changing room that opens onto the room with a therapeutic pool. "There are even two alarm buttons in the changing room," said Hamilton, "in case someone falls and needs help." Because of the privacy of the changing room, someone who needs assistance can use it with a spouse, and parents can use it with their children, without concern about others coming in, explained Hamilton. "Thanks to the accessibility changes, the Center's revenues are up," said Hamilton, "and the facility won a national award from the National Parks and Recreation Association." Hamilton added that if it weren't for ADA design standards, builders would not have had the guidance necessary to build a truly accessible recreational facility.

Even though most ramps are constructed for use by people in wheelchairs, people who are blind benefit as well, maintains ***George Brown, who chairs the Nevada Developmental Disabilities Planning Council***. "I'm so thankful for wheelchair ramps," he says, "because I've fallen on stairs dozens of times. Curb cuts and ramps do a lot of good for blind people too."

While people with all types of disabilities have been aided by the ADA, individuals with mental illness have especially benefited, commented ***Rosetta Johnson, President of the Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Nevada***. The mother of a young adult with schizophrenia, Johnson called the ADA "our strong and enlightening agent in reducing stigma and ignorance regarding mental illness." She explained that many people with mental illness can be restored

to a normal life. "And the ADA is helping us reintegrate them into the community," she said.

Scott Youngs described one business owner who was reluctant to do what was readily achievable to make his hardware store accessible. But he changed his attitude when he discovered that he could broaden his market in the process. "He decided to start stocking grab bars, shower hoses, and other items people with disabilities might need," reported Youngs. "You could almost see the dollar signs in his head!"

Finally, ***Michelle Rico*** added a note about the future. "The ADA's not just for people with disabilities now," she said, "but it affects us in the future too." She pointed out that the ADA will keep us from being restricted as we get older. "I want the ADA to be there for me down the road if I need it," she said.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> Many people, who were afraid of the expense they thought compliance with the ADA would entail, have been pleasantly surprised that their costs have been very low.
>
> Many people are gainfully employed--people who would not be able to get work if the ADA were not in effect.
>
> Businesses, state and local governments, and other entities are no longer putting people off when they request accommodations.
>
> Many steps taken to make public facilities accessible to people with disabilities have been used and appreciated by others as well.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

NEW HAMPSHIRE SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 17, 1995

Host organization: Granite State Independent Living Center

NCD Member: Bonnie O'Day

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in New Hampshire?

New Hampshirites with disabilities have benefited from the ADA in a myriad of ways. Employment opportunities have widened, access to public accommodations and local government services have increased, and accessible transportation is more widely available. And for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, especially, everyday life has become much easier.

After losing her job because of her disability, ***Carol Williams*** was depressed for quite awhile. Then she discovered the ADA. "I was trained for a job, along with several others with disabilities," she said. "I got the job, with no government money involved, and my workplace is accessible and accommodating," says Williams, who uses a wheelchair.

Some simple accommodations have enabled ***David Robar*** to do his job. Robar, who uses a wheelchair, is the ***Public Information Coordinator at the Granite State Independent Living Foundation in Concord***. Robar elevated his desk by putting blocks under it, and his phone includes a headset. His computer keyboard is mounted on a simple slide that positions the keyboard in an accessible location. He uses another slide to position reading material and has a modified work schedule that allows him to work at home when necessary. "The ADA has given me access to employment," Robar stated.

"The ADA was the tool I needed to prevent a man with mild epilepsy from losing his job," stated ***Lee Perseley, an attorney for the Disability Rights Center in Concord***. Perseley

explained that the man's supervisor had an unfounded fear that the man could suffer a seizure on the job. But Perseley, with the ADA behind him, was able to dispel the fear.

A great deal is being done to help people with learning disabilities perform well on the job, according to ***Nancy Martell-Stevenson, President of the New Hampshire Learning Disabilities Association*** and the mother of three children with learning disabilities. One accommodation that helps people with these significant but hidden disabilities is the use of an employment mentor--an expert in learning disabilities who can explain job functions in ways that speak to people's abilities, not their disabilities. The ADA has also brought about literacy programs to help people on the job who are unable to read directions, Martell-Stevenson explained. There is even a computer program that helps people who are dyslexic to function well on the job.

In addition to employment, access to public accommodations has also greatly increased. ***Jeannie Kincaid***, an attorney specializing in disability law, commented that when she needs a haircut, she goes to a beauty salon that actively markets its services to people with disabilities. "The shop advertises that it welcomes people with disabilities, and its ads include a TTY number," she said. "It's nice to see the business community embracing the ADA."

Pam Locke, a single mom who uses a wheelchair, has noticed that "stores and restaurants I couldn't go to before are installing ramps." She described one store whose door opened out into the ramp. So in spite of the ramp, getting in was still difficult because it involved turning her wheelchair around. "I talked with the manager about the problem," she said, "and they recently installed a new door that opens away from you as you're coming up the ramp." Locke believes the ADA has made communities more aware of the disabled population. "We need this kind of legislation," she emphasized.

Walter Plummer feels that his community of Durham is becoming more accessible. Banking and shopping are easier, and recreation activities are more accessible, he finds. "And I get to see and hear the politicians who come to New Hampshire for the presidential primaries!" he remarked.

Thanks to the greater accessibility of public accommodations under the ADA, ***Robin Harrell*** feels that she is better able to maintain friendships. "There are more places where we can meet," she says, "restaurants, movie theaters, parks, and other places."

A wide range of local government services that most Americans take for granted are becoming available to many people with disabilities for the first time. ***Laura Tucker***, who uses a wheelchair, is excited to be able to partake of many of these services. "The new ramp at the municipal building in Bow is not too steep, and it has an overhanging roof to protect it from snow and rain," Tucker said. "I can vote, register my van, and take care of any business I have with the local government on my own," she said. The local community center has also been made accessible, so Tucker can attend community dinners and other functions there. And at Concord's city auditorium, also accessible, Tucker can attend plays and concerts. Thanks to a new elevator installed in Concord's public library, she now has access to the music room, the art room, and the auditorium.

Several speakers expressed gratitude for the improved transportation that has resulted from the ADA. "I can now take regular public transportation to my favorite restaurants, to a doctor's appointment, or to get together with friends," commented ***Laurie de Mayo***, who uses a wheelchair and lives in Manchester.

People with hearing impairments have especially benefited from the ADA, noted many at the Town Meeting. ***Judith Raskin***, once her deaf daughter's messenger to the world, told those present, "the ADA has enriched Joy's life and opened possibilities not available when she was younger." Now Joy can make her own business calls, through the relay, and her mother does not have to intervene in Joy's phone conversations with her friends. Raskin is pleased that, thanks to the ADA, her daughter can enjoy the use of public TTYs and the relay, and participate more fully in all realms of life.

The relay service has also broadened employment opportunities for deaf people, according to ***Dee Clanton, State Coordinator for the Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation***. "Before the relay," she said, "jobs that required the use of a phone were off limits for people with hearing impairments." But now, she said, "deaf people can use the phone at work because of the relay. Interpreter services

are also more available, allowing deaf people to take part in office meetings involving groups of people."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Deaf and hard of hearing people have used new technologies to function more fully in all areas of life.

The workplace is more accessible.

Taxpayers are saving money as people with disabilities are finding employment and paying taxes.

People have become more accepting and accommodating of people with disabilities.

Transportation has become more accessible, both locally and long distance.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

NEW JERSEY SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 15, 1995

Host organizations: New Jersey Developmental Disabilities Council, Association for County Offices on the Disabled, DIAL Independent Living Centers; Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

NCD Member: Mary Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in New Jersey?

All who testified at New Jersey's town meeting had words of praise for the ADA. Access to public facilities and transportation is much better now than before the ADA's passage, many said.

Jackie Stearns appreciates the increased number of parking spaces for people with disabilities and accessible bathrooms she has found in the years since the ADA was enacted. And ***Rick Treano***, who is blind, has noticed that since ADA came into being, there have been more accessible elevators, and some restaurants have Braille menus. "Overall, society is more accommodating to people with physical and visual impairments than before the ADA," Treano said.

"The ADA is a wonderful civil rights law," stated ***Susan Elmer, Director of the DIAL Central Independent Living Center***. She told a story of her successful effort to persuade a large auditorium to make seating available to wheelchair users in all price categories offered to other customers. "When I first called to reserve space for a wheelchair in the lowest price section," she said, "I was told there was no wheelchair seating at that price." But after explaining the ADA to the manager, the policy was changed. Now wheelchair users can enjoy performances even if they cannot afford the highest priced seats.

Shirley Frederick has found many types of public accommodations much more accessible than in the past. The ADA is the greatest blessing in my life," she said. "Before the ADA, there were few places I could get to, but more places have become accessible because of the ADA." Curb cuts, accessible bathrooms, and accessible grocery stores and other buildings allow Frederick to get out and participate in her community. She also notices a very positive change in the attitudes of non-disabled people. "They are much more helpful and courteous than just a few years ago," she maintains.

Shirley Frederick reported that until recently she and her wheelchair had to be lifted into her doctor's office building whenever she went for an appointment. But "my medical doctor has since moved to a new, fully accessible building which he had built with ramps, wide doors, and accessible bathrooms," she said.

Several speakers expressed gratitude for the improvements in transportation that have resulted from the ADA. In fact, ***Pablo Viera*** reports that transportation is the single greatest impact ADA has had on his life. When he graduated from college in 1992, ready to go to work, he had no way to get there. His town of Vineland had no public transportation, and he could not afford to buy a car until he could get a job to pay for it--Catch 22. But Viera applied for New Jersey Transport Access Link and was accepted. "I no longer had the anxiety of wondering if my relatives, friends, or church members had the time to take me to the places I needed to go," Viera stated. "I now have a better job, more conveniently located, and I still use paratransit." Viera also says he has saved enough money to be able to buy his own car in about a month.

Darlene LaRue, who has cerebral palsy, commented that "without Access Link, I wouldn't have a job." Indeed, "it is well-documented that transportation is the main barrier for people with disabilities to work," stated ***Kathleen Gregg, of the New Jersey Association for Persons in Supported Employment***. "But improvements in paratransit have given people with disabilities more access to employment and to other activities as well," she said.

Huntley Forrester, who uses a wheelchair, agrees that paratransit is getting better. His colleague at work depends on it in order to work, although the commute by paratransit is longer than it should be, Forrester believes.

Although public transportation needs to be improved, according to ***Stanley Soden***, "it is definitely getting better, due to the ADA." The ADA has provided recourse for Soden, who has had problems getting a taxicab because of his wheelchair. When a cab company refused to take him because they don't take 'wheelchair patients,' "I insisted I am not a patient and I don't need to be lifted, just helped, into the cab." The company still would not take him, so Soden called the Justice Department. His case is now pending in court. "Funny," said Soden. "I couldn't get the owner of the cab company to talk to me before, but now that we're in court, he's eager to talk about settling the matter." Soden thanks the ADA for giving him the opportunity to fight for his right to get to work like anyone else.

In terms of work, the ADA is very important, several speakers said. The growth in the number of people with disabilities who have been employed due to a drop in barriers "means a reduction in Social Security costs and a saving in taxpayers' money," stated ***Kathleen Gregg***.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Transportation both locally and long distance has improved greatly.

More people with disabilities are finding employment.

In allowing people with disabilities to be more independent, the ADA is saving taxpayers' money.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

NEW MEXICO SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 17, 1995

Host organization: Governor's Committee on Concerns of the Handicapped

NCD Member: Mary Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in New Mexico?

Several speakers described their successful self-advocacy efforts--efforts that they believe would have been far less successful had the ADA not been in effect. Others addressed benefits from the ADA for both employees and employers, while still others spoke about how the deaf community, in particular, has benefited from the ADA.

Robert Burns, a member of the City-County Commission on Persons with Disabilities in Albuquerque, described his success in working with the manager of one of the state's largest shopping malls. Burns met with the manager and told him that the parking spaces for people with disabiites were too far from the accessible entrance, that the entrance with steps should have a sign pointing the way to the wheelchair-accessible entrance, and that the parking for people with disabilities at mall's movie theater was too far from the theater. "All the changes I asked for were put in place in less than four weeks," said Burns. "And the manager praised my demeanor, saying that my approach was the best way to bring about compliance." Burns also described an Albuquerque citizens' group's successful effort to have the fine for illegally using parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities raised from $50 to $150.

When combined with knowledge of the Act's requirements, self-advocacy is especially effective. ***Sandra Dement***, a wheelchair user, has educated herself about ADA building requirements. "So when I got stuck between aisles at Wal-Mart," she said, "I could explain

the architectural requirements to the managers and let them know exactly what they needed to do to make their store accessible. The ADA has been a big blessing in my life," said Dement.

Another woman, ***Hazel Wadsworth***, described her long but successful campaign to make a senior citizen center accessible. "Someone lit a fire under them and it was me!" she said. Wadsworth, who uses a wheelchair for her quadriplegia, was at first excited about the modern senior center in Rio Rancho. Although it was built in 1985, long after 504 regulations were in effect, the building had no accessible door or bathroom. When Wadsworth complained to the building manager, she was told there was not enough money to make the building accessible. "Since many older people have disabilities and mobility problems, it made no sense for the senior center to be inaccessible," she said. The building was made accessible, seven years after she began her crusade. Wadsworth credits the ADA with giving her the leverage to succeed. Now the Rio Rancho senior center is accessible to all older people in the area, thanks to the ADA and one woman's persistence.

The ADA has made a positive difference in employment. For one man, ***Kevin Irvine***, the ADA is like insurance. "I've had HIV for more than 10 years, as well as hemophilia," said Irvine, who is also ***Vice-Chair of the City/County Commission on Persons with Disabilities***. Irvine is very open about his HIV, but so far has not faced employment discrimination. "But it's good to know the ADA is there just in case," he said.

The ADA is a tool to help employers as well as employees, according to ***Greg Trapp, a staff attorney with Protection and Advocacy Services***. "The ADA is helping to reform workers' compensation laws by getting employees who are injured on the job back to work." This saves the employer money, and the employee can stay on the job and off the disability rolls.

The ADA can also reduce the incidence of workplace injuries in the first place. Accommodations like ramps make moving heavy objects easier, so a worker is less likely to be injured on the job, explained Trapp. "The ADA is a win-win piece of legislation," he said enthusiastically, benefiting employers and employees alike.

One group of people who feel they have won access to everyday activities that others take for granted are people with hearing impairments. ***Norman Dawson*** cited a number of activities that are now available to him as a result of the ADA. Hotels rooms are more likely to be equipped with a TTY, a door knocker, and captioned TV. "And because of the ADA I can participate in political activities like Democratic Party functions," he said. Dawson said he can usually arrange to have an interpreter at such occasions.

Dawson also told those at the Town Meeting that he had recently gotten a ticket for speeding, but "all I had to do was call the city traffic department to request an interpreter for my traffic court date," he said. "In the past, if I were in a traffic court situation," explained Dawson, "I would have had to just guess what people were saying."

ADA's importance will only increase with time. One speaker noted that by the year 2025 one-fifth of Americans will be over 65. Since many older people have disabilities, the steps we take now toward accessibility will benefit many Americans in the years to come, as our population ages.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

ADA has helped people with disabilities find employment and stay on the job.

Self-advocacy often yields very positive results. Such efforts would not be possible without the ADA in place.

ADA has brought disabilities to the forefront, and public awareness has increased greatly.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

NEW YORK SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 24. 1995

Host organization: New York State Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
NCD Member: Kate Wolters

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in New York?

At New York's ADA Town Meeting in Albany many individuals spoke about positive changes the ADA has made in their lives. Travel and employment head the list in terms of greatest impact, and people also addressed the positive changes in the public's attitudes toward people with disabilities.

When it comes to local travel, longtime New York City resident ***Claudia Morgan*** is enthusiastic about the improvements that have been made. "If it weren't for buses with lifts, I'd be blockbound," she said. Morgan uses the paratransit system to travel from Manhattan to Brooklyn to visit her grandmother every week.

Intercity train travel has become easier for many people with disabilities, thanks to the ADA's transportation provisions and changing attitudes. "Amtrak is now accessible to my son," says ***Pat Peebles*** of Albany. She described traveling by train with her son to Florida. "He could get on the train in his wheelchair, and the bathrooms were accessible," she said. "Since Amtrak has begun using cars with lifts, thanks to the ADA," said ***Mike Roselle***, another wheelchair user, "I can travel to New York City.

Train stations and airports have been made more accessible in recent years, and changing attitudes have resulted in more accessible transportation to airports in some cities.

Car travel is also becoming easier for people with disabilities, thanks in part to the increasing number of accessible hotels and motels. "And the American Automobile Association (AAA)'s awareness of the ADA has led AAA to send field engineers around the country to investigate lodgings for telephones with flashing lights and portable smoke detectors," reported ***Andrew Kovalovich***. "Only those hotels and motels that are properly equipped can earn the symbol for 'accessible to the hard of hearing' in AAA's travel publications," he said. He also noted that an increasing number of travel agents are paying attention to accessibility in their customer services.

Some of the most enthusiastic comments about the ADA concerned employment. ***Mary Beth Metzger***, who is blind, is a ***personnel administrator for the New York Department of Corrections***. She is able to have materials she needs printed in Braille, and she uses adaptive interfaces to enable her to use her computer. She credits the ADA with getting people's attention. "There were disability rights laws in existence before the ADA," said Metzger, "but it took the ADA to ensure that these laws are enforced."

Mike Roselle also uses a modified computer set-up in his work. "I used to have to type with my nose," he said, "but I got a new type of keyboard, so now I don't have to. I wouldn't have been able to get this accommodation if it weren't for the ADA," he said.

Kristin King knows a number of people with disabilities who are successfully employed, thanks to the ADA. As ***Director of Advocacy for the Capital District Center for Independence*** in Albany, King reports that TDDs and interpreters have helped employees with hearing impairments. "And in many cases accommodations have been as simple as rearranging office furniture," she said.

Many New Yorkers said they have noticed a dramatic change in attitudes toward people with disabilities since the ADA became law. ***Judy Dunbar, a social worker at a residential home for children with special needs in Oneonta***, reports that changing attitudes have helped her community to become accessible. "Oneonta's come a long way," she said. "Now we can take kids on outings without having to lift their wheelchairs over curbs."

"More people offer to help me now than they did before the ADA," said ***Michelle Massiano***, who is visually impaired. And ***Laura Hagen*** reports that salespeople are more

sensitive to her needs when she goes shopping. Hagen, a member of a food co-op, credits the ADA with helping her dissuade the co-op from purchasing an inaccessible building. "My husband and I educated the co-op members about the importance of accessibility not only to current members but to would-be members as well," she said. The co-op then found a building that was already accessible.

Sometimes entire communities make the ADA a high priority. One New York town, Tuckahoe--population 6,000--won a first place award of $3,500 from the ***National Organization on Disability (NOD)*** for outstanding efforts to implement the ADA. ***Matthew Marino, Tuckahoe's NOD representative***, reported that the town has established assisted listening devices in meeting rooms, courtrooms, and the community center. Audible traffic signals have been installed, and the town's newsletter is available on audio cassette. Town buildings have been made wheelchair-accessible inside and out. Steps have even been removed in the courthouse for jurors and judges. "But our most surprising success story," says Marino, "involves a survey we send periodically to residents asking them to identify any disabilities they or a family member may have that emergency personnel should know about in the event of a problem." Residents' responses are entered into a computer, so that in the event of a 911 call, police have immediate access to the information. "Other communities have followed our example," reports Marino, "and both the local press and the New York Times have reported on our 911 program." Tuckahoe will spend its award money on a "talking" computer for the local library.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> Movie theaters have become more accessible to people who are hearing impaired and who use wheelchairs.
>
> Many hotels have become accessible--guest rooms and conference facilities alike.
>
> Travel has become much easier for people with disabilities, from local public transportation to intercity travel by train, plane, and car.

Curb cuts in communities large and small have enabled people who use wheelchairs to get around.

The relay service has been a boon to people who have not been able to communicate with family and friends by phone for years. The relay has also helped many people in the workplace.

Health care services have become more accessible to people with hearing impairments.

The public has become more aware of disabilities.

Many businesses have taken steps toward accessibility as a result of advocacy efforts by people with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

NORTH CAROLINA SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 28, 1995

Host organization: Programs for Accessible Living

NCD Member: Jack Gannon

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in North Carolina?

A great many North Carolina citizens showed up to testify to the positive impact of the ADA at the state-wide Town Meeting held in Winston-Salem on April 28, 1995. Each citizen had a unique story, but many stories told of the impact in three areas: employment, access to government services, and the arts. In addition, several deaf and hard of hearing individuals testified to the vast change in their ability to participate in mainstream American life as a result of the ADA.

"The ADA really gets employers' attention when you're developing training programs for people with disabilities and helping them find jobs." commented ***Chet Mottershead, direct of a rehabilitation facility in Rocky Mount*** and an individual who knows the first hand impact of the law for persons with disabilities. "I've seen tremendous success due to the ADA, and sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The ADA is really needed," he said.

"Thanks to the ADA," said ***Paranita Towson***, who has epilepsy, "it is easier for me to get help and understanding on the job." But sometimes employers resist the notion of reasonable accommodation and need to be educated. "Before the ADA, I talked to my employer about making some changes to accommodate my disability," related ***Jeffrey Bittner***. "But he treated me as if I were pulling his leg." After the ADA became law, Bittner explained the ADA to his boss, who then made the front entrance accessible and even changed the entire floor plan to make the workplace completely accessible. Bittner believes

that "businesses want to know what they can do to accommodate employees and customers with disabilities."

Andy Leach agrees. "Employers have more genuine concern these days," he said. "They're realizing that some accommodations may be no more than putting a desk on blocks or buying a new piece of software." Leach, who is visually impaired, cited the hiring practices of Nations Bank that not only accommodate many people with disabilities but allow them to advance in the company as well.

Sometimes employers simply refuse to make reasonable accommodations for employees, and in those cases the ADA is even more important. ***Brenda Heinz*** recounted that for 20 years her disability has often caused her pain. Before the ADA, she endured the pain rather than ask for help in the workplace. Once the ADA became law, however, she asked for an accommodation that cost less than $200. "I was stunned that the request was denied," said Heinz, whose employer was a local government. Armed with a copy of the ADA, Heinz navigated her way through the official grievance process and finally obtained the needed accommodation. The process was slow, but "the accommodation that resulted enabled me to keep my position," she said.

Local governments are also making strides toward accessibility. ***David Goines*** said that he and others in Burke County formed an ***Impaired Citizens Council*** to work with the government to make its services more accessible. "The mayor was initially resistant," said Goines, "But then things started to change."

Another citizen advisory council worked hard for access to government services in Charlotte. ***Julia Sain*** described her group's efforts to bring about access. "I have worked with the Council since 1986," she said, "and I have seen how much more successful our advocacy efforts have been since ADA went into effect." In 1986 Sain's group attempted to persuade local officials to make the planned new city-county government building accessible. They failed. Then after the ADA went into effect, the citizens' council did educate officials of the need to ensure access to an over-street walkway system the city had been building for years. "The city manager stated that the city would not take ownership of the walkway system if it was inaccessible," Sain said. "This was the same person who refused us in

1986." And the only difference between the 1986 situation and the later one, according to Sain, was the ADA.

In addition to employment and government services, the arts are also more accessible to people with disabilities as a result of the ADA. ***Ken Franklin, state ADA Coordinator***, described Arts Access, Inc. a Raleigh-based group of arts educators, actors, technicians, and others with disabilities who are working to make the arts more accessible for all persons with disabilities. Franklin, a member of the group, stated that Arts Access has put a wheelchair in all arts facilities in the city and has provided a list of interpreters to arts agencies. Arts Access has also trained audio describers--people who describe shows for the visually impaired. Last summer the High Point Shakespeare Festival audio-described all of its productions, and Raleigh theaters are now audio-describing shows.

The School of the Arts in Winston-Salem has also been made more accessible, related ***Mike Phillips***. Phillips, who serves on a disabilities committee of the School, reported that the School has created accessible seating in the dance auditorium in addition to parking spaces for people with disabilities.

The ADA has paved the way for many successes, but perhaps the Act's greatest impact for people who are deaf has been the relay system, now available in every state. "The best part about the ADA is the relay," said ***Ann Davidson***. A vocational rehabilitation counselor for deaf students, Davidson uses the relay at work to communicate with clients, vendors, school counselors, employers, and parents of her clients. Before the ADA, Davidson had to rely on a coworker to take and transmit messages for her.

Davidson offered another story about how the relay saved the day for her. She was at home alone when her basement flooded. At first she panicked, but then she remembered the relay. "I was able to just pick up the phone and call someone to come and fix the problem, thanks to the relay," she said.

Mike Phillips is thankful for the relay too. "Overnight it became possible for me to contact anyone I wanted to communicate with," he said. Phillips feels the relay has made a remarkable difference in his ability to make friends. "Before the relay it was hard to make

contact," he said. "I think the most immediate and far reaching effect of ADA has been the relay."

The relay service benefits the families of deaf people as well as deaf people themselves, ***Dana Daniell*** told NCD. "Before the ADA I had to make all my wife's phone calls for her," he said. "But I didn't always know what to say. I couldn't read her mind," he said. "With the relay, she makes her own calls." Daniell said he and other family members are relieved that they no longer have to serve as interpreters and messengers. "I'm eternally grateful for the ADA," said Daniell.

In addition to the relay, ADA has opened up other aspects of life to people with hearing impairments."Traveling now has more glamor to it," stated ***Peggy Brooks*** in written testimony. "Hotels will accommodate deaf and hard of hearing patrons by supplying decoders for TV, TDDs, knock lights, smoke alarm lights, etc. In the past, deaf people would travel with their own decoders and TDDs. Now I can enjoy the same access to hotel services that everyone else enjoys.

The ADA has brought about many positive changes, stated virtually all North Carolinians who spoke. College student ***Jeannie Wolf*** put it well when she said, "I'm glad the ADA was passed, and I celebrate it every July!"

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Employers are becoming more receptive to employees with disabilities and their needs for accommodation.

City governments are responding to the ADA and to citizens who want to work with them to comply.

Hotels now are much more likely to have close captioned TV, portable fire alarms, and other assistive technologies available for deaf patrons.

The relay service has made people with hearing impairments feel part of mainstream life.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

NORTH DAKOTA SUMMARY REPORT
JUNE 14, 1995

Host organization: Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
NCD Member: Debra Robinson

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in North Dakota?

North Dakotans gathered to tell NCD that the ADA has had a number of positive impacts on their lives. In access to a variety of public accommodations, in expanded employment opportunities, and in public transportation, life has changed for the better since the ADA. Several also testified that the law has brought about intangible benefits as well.

All over North Dakota, according to ***Rich Grey, of the North Dakota Office of Intergovernmental Assistance***, small towns are instituting curb cuts and making their buildings and programs accessible. "State agencies," he said, "are much more aware of their responsibilities with the ADA." More and more, according to Grey, municipalities are incorporating ADA building guidelines into local building codes. Grey added that elderly people benefit even more than people with disabilities from the accessibility changes that are taking place in North Dakota.

Norma Deichler, the Barnes County ADA Coordinator, agrees that communities are doing a better job of creating access. "I see fewer things like parking for people with disabilities with no curb cuts," she said. "People are thinking more about these concerns," she said.

"I travel a lot," added ***Madonna Logosv***, "and what I've seen in the last five years is remarkable. Restrooms, curb cuts, and many services were nonexistent until five years ago," Logish said. "It's only the ADA that has brought about these access changes," she said.

The ADA has been an effective tool for making public accommodations accessible. ***Deb Dilger*** described her effort to persuade a local retail chain to make its restrooms accessible. "I wrote to the manager about the ADA," said Dilger. "But they did make an accessible bathroom, and they added an automatic door," explained Dilger. They even redid their parking lot to create more parking that is accessible. "The place is much more accessible now," remarked Dilger.

The more that public accommodations are made accessible, the more that people with disabilities can shop and make purchases, which makes them more economically powerful. "The more people with disabilities are given access to their communities," pointed out ***April Crane***, the more they can earn at work and spend in stores," she said. Accessibility benefits the entire economy, not just people with disabilities, she pointed out.

Employment is one of the most important areas covered by the ADA. "The Act goes a long way," commented ***Miles Erickson of the Dakota Center for Independent Living***, to help people with disabilities get off welfare, get work, and get involved in their communities." Erickson added that there are many barriers people with disabilities face, and employment need not be one of them.

An unidentified speaker from the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) related that the ADA enabled a union member with a learning disability to remain on the job and to be productive. "His employer, a North Dakota county government," explained the union representative, "refused to explain any set of instructions to the worker more than once. There were planning to fire him," commented the AFSCME rep. But the union local was able to use the ADA to come up with a reasonable accommodation that allowed the worker to perform well and to keep his job. AFSCME, the rep explained, has made a video about the ADA and how the Act can be used to help employers and employees alike.

Before the ADA, many workers kept their disabilities hidden, even though secrecy often meant a reduction in productivity and an increase in strain. "But now workers with disabilities are asking for reasonable accommodations without fear of losing their jobs,"

commented April Crane. "The ADA has given workers the courage to ask for what they need," she said.

In addition to public accommodations and employment, transportation is also important to residents of North Dakota. Before the ADA, commented ***Robin Werre***, accessible transportation in North Dakota was fragmented at best. "Now it is well-coordinated," she said, "and serving several thousand people on a 24-hour a day basis in her community. "The ADA's transportation mandate is part of the reason for the success of transportation in our area," said Werre. "People have been using the accessible transportation to get to work," she said.

Chuck Stebbins is happy with the improvements in transportation in his area. "Paratransit in Bismarck-Mandan has gotten much better with the ADA," Stebbins said.

As important as are gains in public accommodations, employment, and transportation, some of the most valuable changes related to the ADA are intangible. ***Marie Brown*** feels that the ADA has empowered people with disabilities to advocate effectively without being aggressive. Even though some businesses resist compliance with the ADA, "we now have a vehicle to assert our rights," said Brown. "The ADA has been a blessing," added ***Laurie French***.

And ***Audrey Meadows*** summed it up for many when she said, "The ADA gives people with disabilities hope. And hope is very important in people's lives."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> Public transportation has become more accessible, allowing many people with disabilities to go to work and participate in the life of their community.
>
> The ADA has engendered awareness among the public about disabilities and the importance of creating a society that is accessible for all.
>
> Stores, schools, and other facilities have been made accessible to people with disabilities.

The ADA has proved a valuable tool in helping people with disabilities to win access to employment and public accommodations.

The ADA has helped people with disabilities to become more economically independent.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

OHIO SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 4, 1995

Host organization: Ohio Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

NCD Member: Jack Gannon

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Ohio?

A number of Ohioans spoke about the positive changes the ADA has made in their lives. The ADA's employment provisions received especially high marks. Others testified about the benefits to their children with disabilities, and to increased opportunities to participate in civic and community life.

"I've heard employers say again and again that their employees with disabilities are their hardest working and most reliable employees," stated ***David Wilkin***, whose company produced a video in which employers describe their experiences in hiring people with disabilities. According to employers Wilkin has interviewed, people with disabilities are very happy to have a chance to work and are eager to do their best. The employers interviewed said that only minimal accommodations have been required.

Others also testified that most workplace accommodations are minimal. ***Elsie Danovich***, a wheelchair user with an illness that robs her of energy, testified that her employer allows her a flexible schedule. She can work during the hours when she feels the freshest.

Fatica Ayers, whose illness requires her to rest, keep warm, and elevate her legs, has been accommodated at work fairly easily. Her employer gave her the warmest office, and she uses an ottoman to raise her legs. She also takes breaks when necessary. "Once when I couldn't come to work at all but had a meeting to run," says Ayers, "my boss allowed me to

conduct it via a conference call. Even though I needed to rest at home that day, I could still do my job," she says.

Sometimes accommodations are made to help employees care for family members with disabilities. ***Mary Biel***, the mother of a child with severe cerebral palsy, explained that the hospital where her husband works accommodates him by letting him work the day shift. "Our daughter's health problems are worse at night, so we are glad my husband can be at home then," she said.

In addition to requiring reasonable accommodation in the workplace, the ADA also calls for fairness in the job interview process. "Before the ADA, I could go to a job interview and the employer could say we won't hire you because you're disabled," reported ***Tim Harrington***. "And I had no legal recourse." Today employers must give equal consideration to Harrington and others if they can perform the essential functions of the job.

The 'essential function' concept is an important one, according to ***Jerry Droll of ADA-Ohio***. He described an employer he knows who wanted to hire a blind woman because she tested better than other job applicants. But he was worried because she would be unable to count the money in the cash box. But when the employer stopped to think that this activity took place only for an hour every two weeks, he decided to hire her. "The employer realized that this small part of the job was not an essential function," said Droll. "She could perform all the essential functions, so he hired her."

The benefits of ADA are not limited to adults. Children benefit as well, several told NCD. ***Dawn Caldwell's*** son has cerebral palsy, but she is looking forward to his participation in preschool next year. "It's great to see how attitudes have changed," she said. "All the preschools we looked at were accepting and eager to have Alex. They have ramps and accessible bathrooms." Caldwell says that thanks in part to the ADA, she can take her son anywhere and he will feel included.

Brad Hollys of the Independent Living Center in central Ohio agreed that the ADA is benefiting children. He read a letter from a parent who said the ADA has been invoked several times in her five year old son's life for the building of ramps to allow him to get into a number of buildings for physical therapy and other activities.

The ADA is about more than rights-it is about responsibilities as well. ***Irwin Hott*** explained that he had served for three months on a grand jury. "My blindness was not a problem," he said. Hott used a Braille & Speak to take notes and found the grand jury experience fascinating. Hott had been called for jury duty in the 1970s but had been automatically excluded because of his blindness.

Gale Gross described a blind woman who served for two weeks on jury duty. "A few years ago she would not have been allowed to serve," said Gross, who works with ADA-Ohio. People in the court system were sensitive to her disability, and she had a good experience, according to Gross. "She attributes her good experience to the increase in disability awareness brought about by the ADA."

Getting out and participating in the life of the community has become much easier since the ADA, many said. Paratransit is improving, according to ***Ann Gazelle, a social worker*** in Columbus who is blind. "It's the small things that make ADA so valuable," said Ann Christopher. If it were not for parking reserved for people with disabilities and accessible bathrooms, she could not have participated in the Ohio Town Meeting, she said.

As more people with disabilities are participating in community activities, the word is getting out that people with disabilities are consumers. ***Bob McCallum*** stated that one of the largest home builders in central Ohio featured an accessible home at its recent home show. "This is a direct result of changing attitudes that we've been seeing since the ADA was enacted," said McCallum.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Access to participation in the justice system has increased.

People with disabilities have had a chance to show they make good employees.

Simple workplace accommodations have allowed more people with disabilities to be employed.

People in wheelchairs are having the experience of entering restaurants and other businesses through the front door, and that is having a positive effect on self-esteem.

ADA has allowed children to participate in activities that once only non-disabled children could enjoy.

ADA has been a valuable tool for the education of people who are not disabled.

Shopping has become more accessible. More stores are physically accessible, and salespeople are more willing to accommodate customers with disabilities.

Accessible public transportation has improved and continues to improve.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

OKLAHOMA SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 21, 1995

Host organization: Oklahoma City Mayor's Committee on Disability Concerns
NCD Representative: Billie Jean Hill, NCD Staff

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Oklahoma?

Oklahomans who spoke at the Town Meeting in Oklahoma City testified that the ADA has made a positive difference in their lives.

One of ADA's greatest impacts, several speakers said, is in the area of employment. Architect ***Roger Barton*** commented that employers are finding that they benefit from hiring and keeping employees with disabilities.

Kit Phillips of FRIENDS Group, Inc. is proud that her daughter Tina is employed, in spite of the fact that she is mentally retarded and has a physical disability. ADA has helped to change attitudes of employers from focusing on what a person with a disability cannot do to what that person can do. And Phillips's group is working to help high school graduates with disabilities make the transition to adulthood and the work world. "We just got a grant to hire a job coach to work with young people who are ready to be employed," said Phillips. "Once a young person is employed, the job coach will work with him or her and the employer until all three feel comfortable that the employee can perform well on the job. An ongoing resource, the job coach will check in periodically with each employee in the program," explained Phillips.

Greater awareness of disabilities, fostered by the ADA, has also led to increased acceptance by co-workers of individuals with disabilities, according to ***Cathy Ames of the Department of Rehabilitative Services' employment program***. A client of Ames--a woman

who is deaf and a wheelchair user--has been well-received by her co-workers. "In fact, they are all learning sign language so that they can communicate with her," said Ames.

Ames's agency has just launched a new program to help people who are HIV-positive find employment. She admits that such an undertaking is a challenge, but as attitudinal barriers are falling, thanks to the ADA and growth in the disability rights movement, she is hopeful that her HIV clients will succeed.

A lot has changed in terms of business acceptance of the ADA, according to Roger Barton. He remembers that just before the ADA passed, many businesses and employers were asking how they could get around the ADA. "They wanted to do their building before the ADA went into effect so they would not have to comply," he said. "People in business were scared because they did not really know what the law meant." But today it's a different story. "Businesses have seen their customer base expand with ADA implementation," said Barton.

"Businesses used to say they didn't have any disabled patrons anyway, so why make their establishments accessible?" recalled ***George Lewis, who chairs the Mayor's Committee on Disability Concerns***. "The ADA has been very helpful," he says, "as businesses realize that by working toward accessibility they are adding customers--people with disabilities--who couldn't patronize their establishments before."

The growth in disability consciousness that the ADA has helped bring about is giving children with disabilities more opportunities to participate in the activities other children take for granted, explained ***Kenny Violette, ADA Coordinator for the City of Yukon***. He described an effort underway in his community of 18,000 to build an accessible playground. "We have already received contributions totalling more than $110,000 for the Freedom Trail," Violette told those assembled. "The playground will not be specifically for children who are physically impaired, but will be a place where all children can have fun," he said.

The opportunity to participate is what ADA is all about. ***Cathy Ames***, the daughter of a wheelchair user, said, "I see the progress the ADA has brought, through my father's eyes." In the past, Ames said, her family could not go out to eat without a family member first visiting the restaurant to make sure her father's wheelchair would make it through the door.

"Sometimes he had to come in through the back entrance," she said. It is much easier today, she said. Thanks to the ADA, many more places are accessible.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers.

> The public is more aware of people with disabilities than just a few years ago.
>
> People with disabilities have gained confidence and are participating more fully in all aspects of life.
>
> While much remains to be done, the ADA has been a success in increasing opportunities for employment and access to public facilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

OREGON SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 21, 1995

Host organization: Oregon Disabilities Commission

NCD Member: Kate Wolters

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Oregon?

Oregonians spoke enthusiastically about a number of aspects of the ADA and the difference the law has made in their lives and the lives of others. Many spoke about the ADA as a stimulus for the development of an array of assistive technologies, while others focused on employment gains, greater accessibility in public accommodations, and other benefits.

Rachel Cranson told a story about technology and the ADA. Cranson, who is blind, has a 15 year old daughter, an honor student who is also blind. Cranson got a call from her daughter's geometry teacher requesting that the girl drop a class so that she could spend extra time with him to learn to draw better for geometry, especially since she had expressed interest in a career in architecture. ""Get real!" I told him. "She's blind. She'll never be an architect. Why should she drop a class?"" The group at the Town Meeting laughed when she recalled his reply. ""You get real," he told me. He said there are good voice-activated computer programs now, and when she graduates from college they'll be even better. "She could be a stunning architect!" he told me." Cranson attributes the current explosion in assistive technologies in part to the ADA.

T.J. Davis, an accessibility specialist for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Access Project of the Oregon Disabilities Commission, described a woman who wanted to be a nurse and also had a severe hearing impairment. It seemed she could not achieve her goal

because she would be unable to hear through a stethoscope. "But then she learned about an electronic stethoscope that transmits sound directly to her hearing aids," explained Davis. "... it enabled her to become a nurse, and she is now working in a nursing home," said Davis. "The ADA is spawning technologies used in medical settings, churches, etc. to accommodate a variety of disabilities," he went on.

Clearly, new assistive technologies are augmenting the employment provisions of the ADA to expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities. ***Steve Kreutzer, a personnel officer for the Oregon Employment Department***, described three employees within his department who have disabilities. And thanks to reasonable accommodations called for in the ADA, they are doing well in their jobs. One individual, a tax auditor with a hearing loss, makes use of devices for his ears and the phone, according to Kreutzer. The man also has a modified workstation, designed to keep peripheral noise to a minimum, since background noise can interfere with his ability to hear what he needs to hear. Kreutzer described another employee, a disabled veterans outreach specialist, who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and other medical conditions as a result of injuries he sustained in Vietnam. "We work with his therapist and the Disabilities Commission and have obtained hearing assistance devices and modifications that he needed," he said. Kreutzer's third example was a man who works as a hearing referee. His ability to use the telephone was impaired, however, when a large part of his vocal cords had to be removed due to cancer. "He couldn't be understood over the phone," Kreutzer explained, "but we found him special headset equipment that boosts his voice, so he can once again conduct hearings over the phone."

The employment provisions of the ADA have meant a great deal to ***Sandra Kutz*** and her family. Her son, a young man who is retarded, is employed 20 hours a week at a grocery store bagging groceries and carrying them to cars for customers. "My son is earning a minimum wage and working 20 hours a week," said Kutz. "It's a lot better than staying home and not having the chance to develop any job skills. Kutz's son has a sympathetic supervisor and a job coach to work with him until he learns the job well.

Janine Delauney, Executive Director of Portland's independent living center, gets a lot of calls from employers. "They're not saying "do I have to do that?"" she said, "but more and more they're saying, "I never thought about that before."" Delauney is finding employers interested in being educated about the ADA and interested in accommodating employees.

While people with disabilities are finding more opportunities in the workplace, outdoor activities are more accessible as well, thanks to the public accommodations portion of the ADA. ***Jim Ringelberg*** reports that he feels honored to be the lead designer for the Rose Garden Children's Park in Portland. A park and play area that will be accessible to all, the project would not be underway without the ADA, explained Ringelberg. The project includes an accessible play area connected to a soccer field, an archery range, and a garden. There will be a children's amphitheater with accommodations for wheelchair users and children with hearing impairments. "Without the ADA we wouldn't have had the standards we needed to make it truly accessible," stated Ringelberg.

Outdoor events like festivals, fairs, and farmers' markets are more accessible in Portland, as a result of ***Michael van der Kamm's*** advocacy efforts with the city Parks and Recreation Department. People in wheelchairs had been unable to attend outdoor events in the city because of a lack of accessible portable toilets. "If we can't go, we don't show," stated van der Kamm. He worked with the city government, which agreed to adopt a policy requiring any entity seeking a permit for an event in a Portland park to have an accessible toilet available. "People with disabilities can now participate in Portland's outdoor events," remarked van der Kamm, "and it's ADA that has made the difference."

Wheelchair sports are getting more attention and respect than before the ADA, according to ***Judy Arnsmeyer***. She described the process by which the U.S. wheelchair basketball team is chosen. More than 40 athletes in wheelchairs are flown in for the try-outs at the expense of the U.S. Basketball Association. "This would not have happened before the ADA," commented Arnsmeyer.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Rapid advances in technology have been spurred by the passage of the ADA.

Computer-assisted real time services are helping people with hearing impairments to participate in meetings and other functions.

The tone of employers is changing. Instead of viewing the ADA as a burdensome law, they are more likely to want to do what is necessary to accommodate.

Assistive technologies are proving to be reasonable accommodations that are enabling more people with disabilities to function well in the workplace.

More doctors' and dentists' offices are becoming accessible.

People with all sorts of disabilities are feeling encouraged, empowered, and good about themselves.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

PENNSYLVANIA SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 10, 1995

Host organizations: Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Pennsylvania Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, Pennsylvania State Independent Living Council
NCD Member: Jack Gannon

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Pennsylvania?

One of the most important benefits of the ADA, many in Pennsylvania said, has been the change in attitudes that has resulted. Attitudes toward disabilities have changed among non-disabled and disabled people alike. Some testified about improved access to workplace accommodations that have made employment possible, and others addressed the ADA's beneficial impact on the economy and on other disability-related legislation.

While no law can mandate a change in attitudes, many of the tangible changes wrought by the ADA have helped the public to view people with disabilities in a different light. When a bicycle accident in 1986 put Jim Penta in a wheelchair, he lost his job. "I was told that customers are turned off by a person in a wheelchair," Penta said. Not only is Jim working today but he is employed as a salesman for a national appliance company. "I finished in the top 10% recently in a sales competition," he said. Clearly, his career is not suffering from negative perceptions of disabilities.

We are beginning to see more people with disabilities in movies and ads, reported ***Lisa Janoff, an independent living specialist at Liberty Resources in Philadelphia***. "As a woman with a disability, I really appreciate the ADA." Janoff described the excitement people at Liberty Resources feel when they see magazine ads showing people driving cars with hand controls.

Partly because of changing attitudes, ***Dee Sheypeck's daughter, a wheelchair user***, is employed as a model in New York. "***Danielle*** is one of the first models in a wheelchair," said her mother, who related another recent story that reveals changing attitudes toward disabilities. When a friend of Danielle's heard someone describe Danielle as 'handicapped,' the friend replied, "She's not handicapped; she just can't walk."

Because of the rising awareness about disabilities and the need for access, even entities not covered by the ADA are taking steps to become accessible. "I know of churches and private clubs that have voluntarily made their facilities accessible, so that I and others with disabilities can participate," said ***Howard Ervin***. Attitudes among disabled people themselves have changed as a result of the ADA, several said. "I prefer to think of myself as 'handi-capable' rather than 'handicapped,'" said Michael Donmoyer, who uses a wheelchair. "I'm handy and I'm capable," he said. "The ADA has affected me bunches."

Attitudes are clearly changing for the better. A more tangible benefit of the ADA, however, is the growth in employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Many Pennsylvanians shared stories about their successes in the workplace. ***Joan Fenicle***, who is deaf, works in a state office where people come to pay fees. "I use the relay service, and lights have been installed that alert me to what's going on," said Fenicle. She says others in her office have been receptive to learning to communicate with her.

Sylvia Martin, also deaf, works for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. For years she had had no phone at work or at home. "But thanks to the ADA, they got me a TTY at work," she said.

Another successful deaf person, ***Richard Harkins***, has worked as a car mechanic for 26 years, the last 14 as a supervisor. "Lip reading made me miss a lot," he said. "But thanks to the ADA, I now have access to an interpreter. That's a tremendous benefit that helps me every day on the job," stated Harkins.

"I'm here to let you know how much the ADA has helped me with my job," ***Leslie Kelly*** told NCD. Kelly, who is deaf, relies on an interpreter and the relay service. "Since so many businesses, schools, etc., don't have TTY, the relay enables me to conduct business

with anyone," she said. "The ADA has changed many peoples' lives, including my own," said Kelly.

David Golin credits the ADA with helping him get the accommodations he needs to do his job. "When I started my job," said Golin, "there was no accessible bathroom on my floor, so I always had to take the elevator to another floor." Now there is an accessible bathroom on the floor where he works. Another accommodation Golin uses daily is word prediction software. "I just have to type a few keystrokes; it's a great help in my work," he said.

Reasonable accommodation is not usually expensive, according to ***Janet Wolf of Citizens for Independence and Access in York.*** "Sears & Roebuck made 436 workplace accommodations between 1978 and 1992 and found that two-thirds of them cost nothing," Wolf reported. "The average cost of accommodating disabled employees was just $121," she said.

While the ADA has helped many individuals with disabilities to be taxpaying wage earners, the ADA is also good for the economy as a whole, says ***Allen Mertz*** a self-employed durable medical equipment supplier who uses a wheelchair. "Now that the ADA is helping people with disabilities participate more fully in society, the need for adaptive equipment is growing," said Mertz. There are ramps and lifts to be built, walkers, wheelchairs, and electric door openers to be manufactured, and adaptive computer software to be designed. All of these industries will yield jobs and pump more money into the economy, he explained.

Finally, the ADA's existence increases compliance with another disability-related law, the ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Act***. ***Cheryl Brand*** said she had to fight for her nine year old son who has emotional problems to be able to attend public school and ride the school bus. "The ADA is what finally got him in school," said his mother. She believes the ADA has made school officials and others aware that people with disabilities have civil rights.

Phyllis Koster reported that her son Taylor, who is mildly retarded, is successful both academically and socially in his mainstream seventh grade class. "The kids truly like and

accept him and are learning to look beyond differences," said Taylor's mom. She sees his success as a result, in part, of the ADA and the increased awareness it has brought about.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> Attitudes toward disabilities have improved, among people with and without disabilities.
>
> The number of curb cuts has increased, and that has greatly increased the ability of people in wheelchairs to get around.
>
> Access to interpreters and new technologies for people with hearing impairments are expanding employment opportunities for them.
>
> Access to interpreters in medical settings has enabled people with hearing impairments to become informed participants in their own health care.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

RHODE ISLAND SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 21, 1995

Host organization: Rhode Island Governor's Commission on the Handicapped

NCD Member: Jack Gannon

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Rhode Island?

Rhode Islanders told NCD about the many positive effects the ADA has had on their lives. From public accommodations to employment, from the relay service to transportation, the ADA has made a big difference to many people.

The variety of public accommodations that have become accessible is great. For example, grocery shopping used to be an ordeal for ***Karen Nelson***, who has multiple sclerosis. But now when she goes to Stop and Shop to buy her groceries, she knows a motorized cart will be there for her. "I'm thankful that I can shop self-sufficiently," remarked Nelson. "And people in the store are very helpful about getting items that I can't reach. K-Mart stores also provide scooters, Nelson pointed out. "I really appreciate the ADA giving the stores the impetus to provide scooters," she added.

Lorna Ricci has noticed that shopping has become easier since the ADA for a different reason. Ricci, who is extremely visually impaired, explained that before the ADA she was reluctant to ask for help from a sales clerk or a waiter. "I was regarded as odd," she said. "But now, with the ADA, people have more awareness. When I ask people to read something for me because I'm visually impaired, they are usually cooperative," she said. Ricci believes she spends more money now that the ADA is in effect. She gave an example of shopping in a bookstore for her nephew. "Because the sales clerk was so helpful in showing me a variety of books my nephew would like," commented Ricci, "I ended up

buying more books and spending more money than I would have before the ADA, when shopping for gifts was so much more difficult."

Physical access in many communities has been increasing rapidly since the ADA was enacted. "We have curb cuts and ramps sprouting up like weeds all around the state," exclaimed ***Edward Schroeder, of the Rhode Island Independent Living Council***. Schroeder also described what the Catholic Church is doing to increase access for people with disabilities. The Bishop of the Diocese of Rhode Island, he explained, has issued a letter stating that the ADA can be considered diocesan policy regarding disabilities.

Access to public accommodations is making life better for children with disabilities, according to two parents who spoke. ***Teresa Nickerson*** has a three year old daughter who is deaf, legally blind, and cannot use her arms and legs. "Because of the ADA," Nickerson said, "my husband and I can much more easily take our daughter places." Nickerson feels that, thanks to the ADA, more people with disabilities are getting out into the community, and their presence is a good example for her daughter.

Another parent, ***John Sousa***, has three sons with disabilities, and Sousa himself is legally blind. He described his recent use of the ADA in advocating for appropriate accommodation for one son who is mentally retarded and a wheelchair user. The boy had been accepted in a week-long self-esteem building program with others his age, but "we were told he couldn't come to the program unless he had a 24-hour a day attendant to take care of him." Sousa tried to explain that his son needs much less care than that. "In fact, an adult attached to the boy 24 hours a day would interfere with his ability to participate in the program," said Sousa. By invoking the ADA, Sousa managed to get the director to back off, and his son was able to participate fully in the program, where he also formed some new friendships. "So," his father added, "using the ADA and the tools it makes available, he's made linkage with some new friends."

Because of increasing access in public accommodations, ***Robert Gearing*** is able to use his abilities in his chosen field of work. "I can say without hesitation that I would not be able to fully perform my job without the passage of some kind of national accessibility legislation," Gearing wrote in a letter he submitted to NCD. A wheelchair user, Gearing is a

marketing manager in the tourism industry and must travel frequently around the country. "The first and foremost benefit I have found with ADA is the requirement of minimum standards for accommodations in hotels," he wrote. He no longer feels he is asking too much when he expects a hotel to provide him with an accessible room. Gearing also says that the conventions and trade shows he attends must comply with the ADA, and this means that shuttle transportation, meeting facilities, and programs are all accessible. "The associations and meeting planners that produce these shows now have a standard from which they can operate in uniform fashion," Gearing writes. Gearing feels that he is well-qualified for the work he does, but "without the ADA, I would not have the opportunity to pursue a career that my talents are best suited for."

Beth Wilson, an engineer who is hard of hearing, commented that "the ADA permits me to pursue professional growth." Wilson described a recent conference she attended in Boston. Had it been held before the ADA, "I would have been forced to refuse," she said. But because the conference hotel was accessible, Wilson was able to hear every speaker with the use of FM equipment, and she could move to different sessions and compare notes with colleagues. And, as Wilson pointed out, she is not the only one who benefited from her attendance at the conference. The sponsoring organization benefited because she bought a $1,500 ticket; her company benefited because what she learned at the conference was applicable to her work; and the city of Boston benefited because she spent time in its stores and restaurants.

Jim Litvack believes that he owes his job in his chosen field to the ADA. Litvack, who is deaf, works as an independent living counselor. At work he has the accommodations he needs--a light on his telephone that flashes when someone is trying to page him, a TDD, and access to an interpreter.

A service for people with hearing impairments that is mandated by the ADA is the relay. And its benefits are far-reaching. For ***Bruce Bucci***, the relay has transformed his family. The deaf son of deaf parents, Bucci described the pressure on his hearing brother to make all the family's phone calls, explain everything that was happening on TV, and be the interpreter in situations that were too difficult for a child to handle. "It was often very

confusing," said Bucci through an interpreter. But today things are different. "We're all independent now. We don't have to depend on my brother to do things for us." The ADA, Bucci explained, has made people with hearing impairments more powerful and has given them privacy.

Andrew Knight, also deaf, credits the ADA with opening doors for him personally and professionally. "I can call the hospital, fire department, and rescue squad," he said. "And I can call a relative to wish them a happy birthday!" Knight also uses the relay in his work. The manager of a senior citizen center, Knight has found the relay vital to daily operations. "I was able to make requisitions and reservations, secure entertainment, order supplies, communicate with City Hall, and call the police in an emergency, and make appointments for meetings." He was also able to use the relay to make confidential calls regarding an employee. Knight believes he would not have gotten the job if it were not for the relay.

Another important benefit of the ADA is increased access to transportation. "Public transportation in Rhode Island is excellent for the handicapped," stated Edward Schroeder, and others agreed.

Intercity travel is also easier. ***Beth Wilson*** is happy that when she travels, she no longer has to bring along her accessibility supplies--FM equipment, a special alarm clock, her phone flasher, her amplifier, and a smoke alarm. "Quite a load and quite a battle at the airport," she laughed. Now when Wilson checks into a hotel, she just asks for the hearing impaired kit.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> The relay has made a huge difference in the lives of deaf people and their families and friends.
>
> Transportation has become more accessible and more readily available.

People without disabilities are more cooperative and willing to help people with disabilities.

Many stores make shopping scooters available to customers who need them.

More hotels are accessible.

Children with disabilities have been able to participate more fully in activities other children take for granted.

Assistive technologies have opened doors of access for many with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

SOUTH CAROLINA SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 9, 1995

Host organization: South Carolina Protection and Advocacy for the Handicapped, Inc.
NCD Member: Marca Bristo, Chairperson

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in South Carolina?

South Carolinians reported that the ADA has made a difference in very positive ways. Some explained that the Act is good for business, while others addressed greater accessibility in transportation, and increased opportunities for people with hearing impairments to participate in mainstream American life.

There are many examples of businesses benefiting from the ADA, according to ***Chip Harraford. Director of the South Carolina Assistive Technologies Project***, Harraford described a program established by a local lending institution to help people with disabilities get assistive technology devices, especially those that would make employment or education possible. "This program," said Harraford, "means more business for the lender, and it's a direct result of the ADA." And the program relies on no state or federal funds, according to Harraford.

Wes Gibbs, who chairs the Disability Subcommittee for the Mayor of Columbia, agrees that the ADA is good for business. "All 10 Taco Bell stores in the area are accessible, thanks to the attitude of their owner," said Gibbs. He explained that he and Taco Bell owner Fred Katowski visited all 10 stores to determine exactly what was needed to make each accessible. "Katowski saw this as a good, no-nonsense approach to improving his business," said Gibbs. The ADA is landmark legislation, Gibbs believes.

Not only is the ADA good for business, some said, but it often costs businesses very little to comply. According to ***Rena Burnside of South Carolina Protection and Advocacy for the Handicapped, Inc.,*** "people are often surprised that the cost to comply with ADA is so low." She cited one hotel owner who worried that bringing his facility into compliance would be very costly. "He was pleasantly surprised when he learned how inexpensive the changes would actually be."

Some employers deserve high marks for their efforts to comply with ADA and meet the needs of employees with disabilities. Home Depot, a retailer with outlets across the country, was praised by employee ***Jeff Miller***, a wheelchair user. "When I started working at Home Depot, I was asked what could be done to make the store accessible for me and for others as well," explained Miller. "At my request, the cash register was modified so that I could operate it."

Another employer that drew praise was the South Carolina Electric and Gas Company. "They are ahead of the bell curve in ADA compliance," stated ***Lewis Stephens***, a wheelchair user who has worked for the company for a decade. "Even before the ADA, the company made an effort to accommodate me," says Stephens. "But since the ADA, it has been even better. The ADA is great for all disabled people in the United States," he said.

Reasonable accommodations called for in the ADA can make all the difference. ***Donald Bird***, whose fiancee works in a bank, said that she has access to an interpreter on the job. "Without the interpreter," he said, "she could not have retained her job and continued to improve in her work."

Employment helps people with disabilities to achieve independence, as well as providing them with a paycheck that makes them self-supporting. ***Maureen Arnett*** is proud that her 29-year old son who has autism is holding down a job. "He lives with two other young men, one mentally retarded, and one visually impaired," she said. "And all are working."

Barriers to career choices are also falling, as a result of the ADA. One unidentified woman stated that "before the ADA, medical universities in South Carolina could exclude people based on their disability." But today the woman, who is a wheelchair user, is studying

occupational therapy at the Medical University of South Carolina. "And when I graduate, I'll be working and paying taxes," she said.

Fortunately, in addition to increasing opportunities in employment, the ADA is also helping people with disabilities to get to their jobs. "Access to transportation is the single greatest impact of the ADA," proclaimed ***David Reeves of the Disability Action Center in Columbia***. "Before ADA, we had no transportation at all."

Maxie Turner is also excited about her increased access to public transportation. "Because of the ADA I can now ride the bus," she said. "I'm so excited, I feel like a child with my first bike!"

Before the ADA, access to transportation for people with disabilities was considered a luxury, according to ***Michelle Busick, Marketing Director for Santee Regional Transit Authority***. "Now we know that transportation is a necessity if people are to go to work and participate in society," she said. Santee operates buses that carry as many as five wheelchairs, and more buses that are accessible have been ordered. And Santee staff members meet quarterly with users of paratransit to discuss the adequacy of the service. "We keep a list of people who couldn't get to work before but are able to now," Busick stated. She mentioned one man who had told her that without this transportation he would not be able to go to work and feel confident.

The law's provisions for accessibility in transportation and public accommodations are allowing people with disabilities to partake more freely of entertainment, shopping, and other community activities. Most new stores have plenty of parking for people with disabilities, according to ***Judy Arplaster***, whose disability makes standing, walking, and climbing stairs difficult. And an unidentified speaker said she has noticed that small businesses are likely to be receptive to making changes for accessibility. "Ninety-nine per cent of the time, all we need to do is make someone aware of inaccessibility," she said, "and they want to try to do something about it."

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits of the ADA is the relay service, which allows people who cannot use a traditional telephone because of a hearing or speech impairment to communicate with people who use traditional telephones. "I used to come home from work at

lunch to make my husband's phone calls," says ***Linda Van Nusen***, whose husband is speech impaired. "The relay enables him to make his own calls," she says. Van Nusen, who uses a wheelchair, comments that "the ADA is a great law."

Finally, the impact of ADA extends beyond U.S. borders, according to an unidentified speaker. An athlete who uses a wheelchair, she explained, "I compete in wheelchair sports internationally, and people I compete with are so impressed with the ADA. They want to get their own governments to do what our government is doing."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

The ADA is good for business. Making a few accommodations often increases business.

Some businesses and employers in the area are doing a great job in implementing the ADA.

The telecommunications relay service is a great help to people with hearing impairments.

The increase in parking spaces for people with disabilities has made access to stores, employment, and other facilities much easier.

South Carolinians with disabilities are experiencing an increased sense of citizenship and empowerment.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

SOUTH DAKOTA SUMMARY REPORT
JUNE 8, 1995

Host organization: Western Resources for dis-ABLED Independence

NCD Member: Debra Robinson

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in South Dakota?

South Dakotans spoke enthusiastically about the difference the ADA has made in their lives, in terms of access to a variety of places and activities, greater opportunities in employment, and accessible transportation. Several also spoke about an intangible benefit of the ADA--increased self-confidence.

The ADA has brought about access to a wide range of public accommodations. ***Terresa Thompson*** gave an example of a restaurant in Starfish. "At first the owner struggled against becoming accessible because he feared the cost would be way too much," she said. But after working with several people in the disability community, the owner made the necessary changes, Thompson explained. "He is now extremely excited about the changes that he has made because it has increased his business." The restaurateur's efforts were acknowledged by Western Resources for dis-ABLED Independence when the organization presented him with its Barrier-Basher award.

Thompson also told NCD that her church has become accessible since the ADA went into effect. "Now there are about 10-15 people with various disability types that are attending the church," she stated. Churches, by the way, are not covered by the ADA, but Thompson's church is one of many that is making accessibility changes so that members and potential members with disabilities will not be excluded.

Pam High reported that her town of Sturgis has put in curb cuts, so that people who use wheelchairs, electric scooters, and walkers can safely move about. High praised her

town's government for making sure that the curb cuts are kept clear of ice and snow in the winter.

Even South Dakota's small towns are making accessibility changes. "In my travels through many of the small towns of western South Dakota," explained ***Lauren Tolberg***, "I have noticed more and more small businesses making their bathrooms and parking accessible." While Tolberg acknowledges that much remains to be done, she believes that the changes she has seen reflect a shift in attitude toward people with disabilities.

Recreation is becoming more accessible because of the ADA, ***Pat Czerny*** reported. He pointed out that the Black Hills Play House, a major tourist attraction in western South Dakota, has made its performances accessible to the deaf and hearing impaired. "At least one performance of each play presented has sign language interpreters," he said.

One reason buildings are becoming more accessible, explained ***Hyatt Simpson***, is that builders are doing a better job in the design stage. She pointed out that doorways and halls are more often being made wide enough.

Shelly Pfaff is not disabled, but she appreciates the fact that public accommodations are becoming more accessible. Now she is able to enjoy getting together with her disabled friends at restaurants and church. In the past, the only places they could get together were their homes.

While access to public accommodations has allowed people with disabilities to participate in many of the activities able-bodied people take for granted, the importance of employment access cannot be overlooked. And the ADA has made a big difference in that area, many at the Town Meeting said. ***Don Michlitsch, of South Dakota Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired***, commented that he has seen a change in the attitude of employers. They are now more willing to work with disabled employees, he pointed out.

In addition to employers' greater receptivity to employees with disabilities, the ADA provides for reasonable accommodations in the workplace. ***Venaline Gogue***, who works as a store cashier, has a back injury which does not allow her to stand for long periods. But the store owner insisted that she stand while she work, so Gogue requested assistance from South Dakota Advocacy Services. She got help in explaining the ADA to the owner, and a

reasonable accommodation was found--a stool for her to use when she needs to sit. Gogue has been able to keep her job and is quite pleased about it. She also reports that she finds people more willing to accept her and her disability since the ADA became law.

Tari Kilian has also benefited from the ADA when it comes to employment. Before the ADA, "employers took one look at my thick glasses and dismissed my abilities altogether," she said. She was also out of luck, she said, because she could not read the computer screen. "I am happy to report that due to the ADA I was provided with an extremely beneficial accommodation," she said. "I was provided a computer program that enhances the print on the screen. This allows me to read and see what I was typing. I no longer have to depend on other workers to complete my work duties." Kilian added that the computer skills she has gained have improved her status in the workplace.

While access to the workplace is vital for most people, being able to get there is also important. And thanks to the ADA, many people with disabilities now have the transportation they need to get to their jobs. ***Kathy Ertel*** commented that, thanks to improvements in public transit, she can get to work as well as do other things she needs to do, like grocery shopping.

Public transit has also made a difference to ***Shelly Schock***. "Due to the ADA," she said, "the City of Rapid City has made their transit system accessible, which has allowed me to get to work and maintain my employment."

Sandy Magnavito spoke on behalf of her mother who, before the ADA, could not use public transit in Rapid City because it was not accessible. "But thanks to the ADA and myself advocating on her behalf, she can now use the transit system to go shopping, run errands, and go to doctor appointments," said Magnavito.

Although not as tangible as transportation, work, and public accommodations, the increase in self-confidence reported by many individuals with disabilities as a result of the ADA is important. ***Scotty Backens*** spoke for others as well when he commented, "the ADA has given me self-confidence, support, and a boost in self-esteem. It has made me feel like a first class citizen."

Audrey Cherrette remarked that she feels the ADA has allowed people to admit that they have a disability by giving them self-confidence and a sense of support. "They are no longer ashamed about being labeled as a disabled person," commented Cherrette.

And to ***Laura Moeding***, the ADA is for everyone. "It is an act that guarantees all of us the right to equal participation in society," she said simply.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

People with disabilities are making gains in self-confidence and self-esteem.

Public transit, once off-limits to many people with disabilities, is much more accessible, and people are using it for work, shopping, medical appointments, and other errands.

Many buildings and community activities are now accessible to people with disabilities.

Reasonable accommodations in the workplace are making it possible for people with disabilities to be gainfully employed.

Curb cuts are becoming plentiful. They can now be found in cities and small towns alike.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

TENNESSEE SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 6, 1995

Host organization: Coalition for Tennesseans with Disabilities

NCD Member: Marca Bristo

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Tennessee?

Tennesseans are enthusiastic about the impact the ADA has had on their lives, according to those who participated in Tennessee's Town Meeting. The law has been especially meaningful to families, but businesses have also benefited. Employment opportunities for people with disabilities have increased, and state and county agencies have expanded access at little cost. Transportation has also become more accessible. And for the most part, positive changes have been the result of voluntary action and self-advocacy, rather than legal action.

"Before the ADA was passed, my family couldn't go anyplace together because of my mom's wheelchair," explained ***Kristopher Hazard***, an eight year old. "But now," he says, "many places are accessible, and we can go on outings as a family. I'm glad for the ADA." Kristopher is pleased that his mother can also go places alone. The local bank, the post office, and other places in the community have installed ramps and handicapped parking.

Kristopher's mother ***Sharon Hazard*** echoes her son's appreciation of the ADA. Now that the community has become more accessible, she no longer has to ask her children to run errands for her. "My kids are free to be kids. And by increasing accessibility, the ADA has allowed me to be the mom I want to be." Hazard believes the ADA has made significant changes in the lives of people with disabilities. "Definitely in mine," she said.

Another mother also credits the ADA with allowing her child to be a child. ***Sherry Rademacher***, who is deaf, remembers that before the ADA, she had to ask her daughter to make phone calls for her and interpret for her. "Now she can play," said Rademacher. "I don't have to interrupt her any more. We both like it better this way!"

Ian Miller, whose wife Angela has cerebral palsy, is a fan of the ADA. "Since the ADA, so many opportunities have opened up," he said. "Now we can go into any market together without my having to lift Angela over the curb." Miller's consumer habits have been influenced by the ADA. "Even when Angela is not with me," he says, "I try to patronize accessible places. If I have a choice between a place that is not accessible and one that is, I'll choose the one that is."

In addition to families, businesses have also benefited from the ADA. Two restaurant owners testified that making their restaurants accessible was a wise business decision. ***Jock Lijoi*** first began to think about making his restaurant accessible when he met the Hazard family, who live in his community. Lijoi built a ramp, a deck, and additional parking. "And people in wheelchairs are not the only ones who benefit from the changes. We are in a tourist area, and there are a lot of elderly people as well as young people with strollers who take advantage of the ramp," he said. Lijoi is setting aside money to redo the bathrooms and offer Braille menus. "I encourage other business owners to go above and beyond the ADA," said Lijoi. "This has increased my business."

Another restaurant owner, ***Ricky Moore***, agrees with Lijoi. "The bridges and ramps we added benefit the business through increased patronage," she said.

Other businesses have also found accessibility good for the bottom line. ***Paul Gibson*** manages a large Nashville hotel. "We've improved guest rooms, parking, and have educated staff about the possible needs of disabled guests," he said. The stairs at the entrance to one of the hotel restaurants will be removed, and several guest rooms that are being renovated will connect with non-accessible rooms, for use by people who travel with attendants.

The ADA has made a big difference when it comes to employment, several said. ***Glen Barr*** spoke on behalf of "several friends who couldn't come because they're working. Blame the ADA for that!" He described his three friends, successful workers who have

disabilities. Then he added, "Employers are seeing advantages to hiring people with disabilities. They are competent employees, enthusiastic and productive. My friends and I appreciate the ADA," he said.

Diane Coleman described how an employer was able to retain a valued employee, in spite of her disability. ***Coleman, the Co-Director of the Technical Access Center in Middle Tennessee***, related that a hospital had been pleased with its medical transcriptionist for many years. When she began to lose her sight, the hospital approached the Center for help. The hospital learned about screenreading software and voice synthesizers and acquired the equipment, so that the employee could continue her work.

Kenton Dickerson of the Chattanooga Independent Living Center stated that he has placed 54 people with disabilities in jobs. In addition to being productive citizens, these people have contributed $91,000 in taxes to their local, state, and federal governments.

The state government in Tennessee has hired many people with disabilities, and the cost of accommodation has been low. "More than half the accommodations cost nothing at all," reported ***James Davis, the state ADA Coordinator***. For those accommodations that did cost money, the average cost was $206, according to Davis.

Part of making community activities accessible is transportation. ***Susan Stacy*** praised the improvements the city of Knoxville has made in public transportation to comply with the ADA. "In 1992 paratransit was restricted to medical trips," said Stacy."I couldn't use it to get to job interviews. Now I can take it almost anywhere. I can take my three year old to a movie, a store, etc." Saturday hours have been added, she said, and the service is widely used.

One of the most successful aspects of the ADA is that most of the improvements that have taken place have been made voluntarily. Many citizens have self-advocated, but few have resorted to legal action. ***Wynelle Carson*** is typical. Although she was vice president of her local arts guild, she had to enter through the back door. She requested a ramp at the front door and got it. ***Larry Breneman*** is also typical. He, along with others, wrote letters to a local grocery store requesting ramps and parking for people with disabilities. Their requests were honored. Breneman also asked for and got an elevator installed in the city hall after he

told officials that being carried to the second floor for city council meetings was unacceptable to him and that it presented a liability problem for the city.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Making accessibility improvements can be good for business.

Many business owners are looking for information about how to make their facilities accessible at a reasonable cost.

Many restaurants and hotels are now accessible.

Workplace accommodations are usually inexpensive. And a willingness to make accommodations attracts quality employees.

In many cases, modifications made to benefit people with disabilities benefit people without disabilities as well.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

TEXAS SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 22, 1995

Host organization: Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities
NCD Member: Mary Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Texas?

The ADA has positively affected the lives of a great many Texans, especially in employment, but also in terms of increased access to higher education and a variety of other activities.

Brian Smith, who is blind, is the ***Assistant Vice President for Personnel at NationsBank in Dallas***. NationsBank, he said, is committed to complying with the ADA by making reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities. In fact, the company has established a separate cost center, so that managers are free to base their hiring decisions on skill, education, and experience, rather than on the cost of accommodation. "Besides," Smith pointed out, "the average cost of accommodation at NationsBank has been less than $200." Smith credits the ADA for the employment opportunities available to him. "The ADA opened doors for me to use my education and experience to get a good job and to do what I was trained to do," he said.

Robert Langford agrees that the ADA has made an important difference when it comes to employment. "The ADA," he says, "has given people with disabilities the opportunity to compete in the marketplace for employment." And thanks to reasonable accommodations called for by the ADA, "people with disabilities can get the equipment they need to work side by side with their non-disabled coworkers," said Langford.

The DFW Airport has embraced the ADA. Before the ADA was passed, according to ***Kimberly Bunting, of the Dallas Mayor's Committee***, the airport used arbitrary methods to

reduce the number of applicants it considered for employment. With the ADA, arbitrary barriers to employment were removed. "DFW Airport reports that they are finding better applicants than before and would like to hire more people with disabilities," reported Bunting.

Bunting also cited a Dallas hotel that has gone far beyond the law's requirements to become an accessibility leader in the hotel industry. This hotel, Bunting explained, expects to recoup its costs through additional business that will come from being an accessible site for conferences, meetings, and other events.

Citizens from several communities reported that public awareness where they live is increasing as a result of the ADA and that physical barriers are falling in their communities. "It used to be that I couldn't go into public facilities with my hearing dog," said ***Lee Neal***, who is hearing-impaired. "Now all the police in Mesquite are trained to be aware of service animals." Neal believes the training is a result of increased awareness of disabilities, brought about by the ADA.

"Many physical barriers have been removed in Fort Worth and Arlington," related ***David Gentry, a computer software engineer***. "These changes, a result of the ADA, are allowing me to get out in the community and be part of things," stated Gentry.

Johnny Martinez started at the ***University of North Texas*** in 1990 when the ADA was enacted. Since then, "UNT has installed automatic doors, elevators, curb cuts, and other accommodations that make education much more accessible," said Martinez. The ADA has also made faculty members more aware of disabilities, according to Martinez, and "professors are now more willing to accommodate students with disabilities."

"We are more visible now than we were before the ADA," said Martinez, "thanks to the removal of barriers brought about by the ADA." Martinez believes that as more people with disabilities become more visible to the rest of society, public acceptance will grow.

The Texas state government is working hard to comply with the ADA by making all of its activities accessible. ***Joe Bontke, Training Coordinator at the Southwest Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center***, described how even the state lottery is being used as a tool to get businesses to comply with the ADA. "We asked all 8,000 lottery ticket

vendors if they are accessible. Most said yes, but many actually were not," said Bontke. Bontke's organization is providing assistance to those that are not yet accessible. Vendors have incentive to comply, since they get 1% of the money when they sell the winning ticket. "But vendors have to pass an ADA audit in order to get the money!" said Bontke.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers.

Attitudes, the major barrier to people with disabilities, have improved.

Opportunities in employment and education for people with disabilities have expanded.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

UTAH SUMMARY REPORT
MAY 3, 1995

Host organization: Utah Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

NCD Member: Mary Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Utah?

Utahns expressed enthusiasm for the impacts the ADA has had on their lives. In public accommodations, in employment and transportation, the ADA had made a positive difference, several said. Others describe the many state and local government services that have been made accessible. And the ADA was also hailed as an effective tool for self-advocacy and for the awareness it has brought about among the public.

The area of the ADA's greatest impact, according to most of the speakers, is in the area of public accommodation. ***Ricki Landers, of the Utah Independent Living Center,*** pointed out that shopping malls and entertainment establishments are much more accessible, thanks to the ADA. And sporting activities have also become more accessible, she said. Landers expressed appreciation for the incentives that help business owners to make their establishments accessible.

Restaurants have become more accessible, commented ***Gordon Richins of Options for Independence.*** Richins, who uses a wheelchair, offered special praise for The Village Inn, a new restaurant in Logan. "I can park near the building, and I can easily get inside," he said. "And once in the restaurant, I have plenty of room to maneuver," he explained. I don't feel downgraded when I go there." People without disabilities can little imagine how degraded a

person with a disability may feel when he or she cannot get into a restaurant, a bathroom, an office, or any other place everyone else can use without even having to think about it.

In addition to the many improvements in access to public places, the ADA has also expanded employment options for people with disabilities. ***Arlene Thomas, of the Utah Independent Living Center,*** commented that employers are becoming more aware of what people with disabilities can do and are more willing to hire them.

The Utah state government is assisting with the implementation of the ADA's employment provisions. ***Anna Jensen, Director of the Industrial Commission of Utah's Labor Division,*** explained that her office has instituted an Alternative Dispute Resolution program that helps employers and employees become better educated about the ADA and its requirements. "Alternative Dispute Resolution has been particularly effective in educating employers as to what are considered reasonable accommodations," she said. "Through the Division's educating employers and employees about the ADA," Jensen added, "people with disabilities have been able to have greater job satisfaction and possibilities."

Of course access to public transportation is an essential ingredient in making employment, as well as a host of other daily life activities, available to people with disabilities. "The Utah Transit Authority has ordered only buses with lifts since August 1990," commented ***Barbara Toomer of the Disability Rights Action Committee.*** "Now 85% of all routes are accessible," she said. And Orion III buses have been ordered to strengthen Salt Lake City's paratransit program, Toomer explained. "On the whole, I really think the ADA has helped people a great deal," Toomer added.

Several speakers noted major improvements in the accessibility of services provided by state and local governments. Barbara Toomer described the state government's efforts to remodel state office buildings. The capital building has been renovated, an effort that included overhauling cafeteria bathrooms. "After all," commented Toomer, "as one of our members pointed out to the facilities manager, "Didn't your mother tell you to wash your hands before eating?"

One particular state service that has been made accessible is the Utah bar exam. ***Holly Foster,*** an attorney with the Legal Center for People with Disabilities in Salt Lake City, explained that the State Bar had taken the position that it would only provide one type of accommodation, regardless of a person's disability. But Foster's office helped a disabled individual with a different disability obtain the accommodation necessary to take the exam, and she passed it. "I feel that with that one victory, we have educated the Bar regarding their obligations to accommodate," remarked Foster, "and we have seen a change in this policy which will affect all future candidates with disabilities who sit for the Bar in Utah."

Salt Lake City launched a creative effort to expand the number of curb cuts the city could afford to make. Through "Access Salt Lake," businesses purchase curb cuts and are recognized for their purchase with a plaque bearing their name. Profits from the curb cut sales, reported Barbara Toomer, are used to augment community development block grant funds targeted for curb cuts in residential areas.

Arlene Thomas noted county and municipal services that have been made accessible as a result of the ADA. "Libraries in Davis County are being made accessible for people with disabilities," she said. And Sunset City is working to make its buildings and parks accessible, Thomas explained.

Perhaps even more valuable than the ADA's specific provisions is the law's effectiveness as a tool that people can use to advocate on their own and others' behalf. Barbara Toomer, explained that after the Mayor of Salt Lake City did not act on repeated requests to make municipal facilities accessible, "approximately 35 people with disabilities showed up in the Mayor's office demanding that the city comply with the federal law." Since that meeting, according to Toomer, the Mayor has worked closely with citizens with disabilities to increase access to municipal services and facilities. "We were consulted when the airport authority examined their facility for access," she said. And Toomer and others were also consulted in the planning of a new baseball field.

Finally, the awareness brought about by the ADA has made many people with disabilities feel more respected. People are becoming aware that the ADA is a civil rights

law, commented Arlene Thomas. "People with disabilities are recognized as people instead of being put aside," she added.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers.

More public accommodations have been made accessible to people with disabilities.

Employment opportunities have expanded for people with disabilities.

Local and state services routinely offered to non-disabled citizens are becoming accessible to people with disabilities as well.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

VERMONT SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 14, 1995

Host organizations: Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Vermont Center for Independent Living
NCD Member: Larry Brown

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Vermont?

Vermonters told NCD that the ADA has made an enormous difference in their lives--in services provided by government entities, and in access to employment and public accommodations. And the relay service, mandated by the ADA, combined with technological advances, have made a world of difference for people who are deaf. In addition, the law formed the basis for lawsuits and zoning changes which have resulted in improved access.

Several speakers talked about how their cities and towns are going to great lengths to make buildings and services accessible to all citizens. ***David Sagi is President of the Board of Aldermen in Rutland***. A wheelchair user for many years, Sagi told those assembled that the building where he now attends aldermanic meetings is a building he could not get into when he was growing up in Rutland. Sagi also explained that when the Rutland Board joined cities all over the country in signing a resolution to oppose unfunded mandates from the federal government, "we added that we don't consider the ADA and other civil rights laws unfunded mandates."

Vermont's state government is also moving diligently toward accessibility, according to ***Ron Gonyea***. "State buildings have instituted levered door handles, ramps, automatic

doors, and other changes that make it easier for people," says Gonya. "The ADA is a good law, and it's working," he added.

The ADA is helping people with disabilities to get and keep jobs. "When employers are shown how to make a reasonable accommodation, and they realize it's not a big bucks item," says ***Tom Pombar, Executive Director of the state Developmental Disabilities Council***, "they're usually willing to cooperate."

Kevin Veller, Executive Director of the Vermont Association of Business, Industry, and Rehabilitation reports that she and her staff of job developers notice a major change in job prospects for people with disabilities since the ADA was passed. "Since the ADA, employers know they have an obligation," she says. "And we have better access to employers." Veller went on to describe two situations in which the ADA prevented employment discrimination. In one recent case an employer posted a job opening with her agency. She had a client who was well-qualified for the position and sent his resume to the employer. The employer was pleased with the resume and wanted to interview the applicant right away. "When I told him the individual needs an interpreter who won't be available until next week, I could feel the employer gulp over the phone," Veller said. "While the hiring decision has not yet been made, the employer hung in there. And this never would have happened before the ADA," Veller concluded.

A second story from VABIR involved a client who was interested in pursuing an opening at a bank. "He had never had a job and was unsure whether he could handle the responsibilities," Veller said, "so we were able to work out a trial with the supervisor." The trial went well. The man could perform the essential functions of the job, and the supervisor offered him a position. Then came word from the supervisor's supervisor that he was still 'assessing the matter.' "I explained that my client was savvy about his rights under the ADA, and that back pedaling on the part of the bank after the offer had been made was not a good idea," she said. "They didn't withdraw their offer, and the man is employed."

As essential as access to employment is access to public accommodations. For one St. Johnsbury restaurant, an unfortunate fire brought with it the opportunity to incorporate access

into the rebuilt structure. "In rebuilding, they consulted me," said ***David Timson, an ADA consultant***. "They did a beautiful job in making the new restaurant totally accessible," he said. Timson also described an accessible bank in the town. "People in wheelchairs can get in and do their banking business," he said.

Libraries are a vital resource for many, and ***Sanford Marx, President of the Friends of the Rutland Free Library*** read a letter from ***Paula Baker***, Librarian, about how the ADA made the facility accessible. Housed in a building that dates back to 1858, the four story library was long on charm but short on access. "By 1987 a ramp was built to the front door and the first floor had an accessible bathroom," Marx read. But lectures and other programs were off limits to people who could not climb stairs. It was the formation of a Mayor's committee to address access that moved the library board to take action, the letter explained. "Officials were consulted, and the voters approved," Marx read, and "ADA-approved, we moved back into a fully accessible building." Baker's letter concluded, "Those people became us, and we became them, which is as it should be."

As in many other states, in Vermont people who are deaf benefit from the ADA in some special ways. "The relay is just amazing!" exclaimed ***Rene Pellerin*** through an interpreter. The state Coordinator of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Department of Aging and Disabilities, Pellerin explained that before the ADA, he employed an interpreter two days a week to help him make phone calls to hearing people. But inevitably Pellerin would have to leave a message when he called and then his call would be returned on one of the days when the interpreter was not in. Phone tag was intense, but things are different with the ADA. "The relay has really changed business phone work for deaf people, as well as doctor's calls, etc," commented Pellerin.

Pellerin is also glad to see FM sound systems at movie theaters. "Instead of just dropping my children off at the movies," Pellerin said, "I can go and watch with them."

The ADA helped Pellerin instigate a change that will benefit deaf people all over the country. He explained that he had been offered a very favorable home and car insurance package. "But headquarters turned me down because I'm deaf," he said. Apparently deaf

drivers are in a high risk category, even though statistically they are not a greater risk than hearing drivers. Pellerin worked with the state Human Rights Commission to persuade the insurance company to abandon its discriminatory policy against deaf drivers.

The increased access to interpreters that the ADA has helped bring about is appreciated in many settings. But nowhere is it more necessary than in the hospital. ***Yolande Henry*** explained that when her husband had a heart attack, the hospital provided an interpreter, and it was a great relief to her. "I could understand everything the doctor said," exclaimed Henry. "I see more provision for interpreters all over, and it's really changing my life," she said.

Sometimes the ADA supersedes local zoning ordinances. ***Chryss Jones***, who works with an independent living center, described an instance in which a woman wanted to put a ramp in her apartment building to accommodate a wheelchair-using tenant. "The ramp would intrude on a setback, explained Jones, "but the ADA technical assistance manual says that zoning may have to be adjusted in implementing the ADA." The ramp was installed.

Jones also cited the owner of a fruit and vegetable stand that had burned down. "He wanted to rebuild it with a wider aisle to accommodate wheelchairs," said Jones, "but then the structure would be so close to an adjacent property as to be a zoning violation. The owner of the other property did not mind, and again the zoning was easily adjusted to make the produce stand more accessible.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Access to interpreters has increased.

Municipal governments are taking action to make their buildings and programs accessible to people with disabilities.

Designated parking is much more available, and the spaces themselves are more likely to be wide enough to accommodate a van with a lift.

Employers are more receptive to hiring people with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

VIRGIN ISLANDS SUMMARY REPORT
JUNE 19, 1995

Host organization: Virgin Islands Advocacy Agency

NCD Member: Lilly Pollo

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in the Virgin Islands?

Citizens of the U.S. Virgin Islands gathered to tell NCD their stories about the impacts the ADA has had on their lives. The ADA has made a positive difference in employment, and it has empowered people with disabilities to speak up for their rights. And then there are the many small daily life activities that have been enriched as a result of the ADA.

"Before the ADA," commented ***Camille Ayala of the Virgin Islands Advocacy Agency***, "you never saw people with disabilities in the workplace. But now you do," she added proudly. And ***Astrid Jones***, who is hearing impaired, spoke so happily about her part-time position in a store that she drew congratulatory applause from the audience. ***Vanessa Higginbotham*** is glad for ramps and other accommodations that allow her to work as well. "I'm just glad to be working," she said. "I'm glad I can get out there and do it."

Another speaker described her friend's success in remaining employed despite her rheumatoid arthritis. "She has a flexible schedule," explained ***Stephanie Cott-Williams, a member of the Virgin Islands legislature***, "so she works when she can, and she rests at home when she has to without fear of losing her job." Cott-Williams added that the ADA "is a valuable tool to improve life for people with disabilities," and she encouraged all those present to make use of this landmark piece of legislation.

Many Virgin Islanders told NCD that the ADA has empowered them as well as others they know to speak up for the rights people without disabilities take for granted. "And people with disabilities are the best advocates for their own needs," stated ***J.A. Johnson***.

Roy Williams's experience illustrates Johnson's point. Speaking through an interpreter, he explained that through the Virgin Islands Advocacy Agency, he was able to get an interpreter to accompany him in court. And he won the case against his employer who had fired him for not showing up for work. Williams had been sick, and his mother had called the restaurant where he worked to explain that he could not come to work because of illness. "The ADA helped me," Williams said. Without it, he would have had a much more difficult time acquiring an interpreter in order to challenge his employer's decision in court.

Jameel Muhammad feels empowered by the ADA, so much so that he is acting in his role as auxiliary police officer to ticket vehicles that are improperly parked in specially designated parking. "We need to make sure the ADA and all disability laws are implemented for all of us," Muhammad added.

Pat Nobbie, the mother of a 10 year old with Down's Syndrome, finds the spirit of the ADA empowering. "The ADA gives us the expectation," she said, "that people with disabilities belong in every area of life. I know my daughter's life will be enhanced by the ADA."

Many in the Virgin Islands testified that their daily lives are richer as a result of the ADA's passage. "I say thank you," said ***George Flores***, who has AIDS. "If not for the ADA, I wouldn't have as wonderful a life as I do. I know, with the ADA, I have certain rights," he commented. "I use them because that's what they're there for." Flores added that "the ADA gives me the ability to be independent."

The ADA is for everyone, stressed Stephanie Cott-Williams. "We don't know when a stroke or a stray bullet or an aneurysm may strike," she said. Those who do not directly benefit from the ADA today may well benefit from it tomorrow.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

The ADA has empowered many people with disabilities to speak up for the reasonable accommodations they need to be fully participating members of society.

Employment opportunities have expanded since the ADA's passage.

The ADA offers many benefits, to disabled and non-disabled citizens alike.

Services for people who are hard of hearing have expanded a great deal.

Interpreters and TTYs are much more readily available than they were in the past.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

VIRGINIA SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 7, 1995

Host organization: Endependence Center, Inc.

NCD Member: Larry Brown

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Virginia?

Things have changed for the better as a result of the ADA, Virginians told NCD. Because of improving attitudes about disabilities, many businesses have complied with the law without being prodded. And many other businesses and facilities have responded positively when reminded of their responsibility to comply with the law. Access to employment has improved, as has access to long distance transportation, some said. And there have been other positive changes as well.

An example for other businesses to follow, several said, is the Wal-Mart chain and its policy of making all stores accessible. ***Juanita Blake*** rides in her wheelchair to her local Wal-Mart and, once there, has no trouble getting in and doing her shopping. There is always an employee available when a person with a disability needs help in shopping at Wal-Mart, speakers said.

Paul Dodge has found that some stores are willing to accommodate him by having a wheelchair available for him to use when he comes into the store. "I can use my crutches to get to the store," Dodge reported, "and then I transfer to the wheelchair for shopping." Dodge reports a domino effect. "When the owner of one store sees that another store is providing me with a wheelchair, they decide to do it too."

When it comes to prodding businesses and others to make their facilities accessible, it is self-advocacy, not legal action, that has done the job in most cases, reported many Virginians. ***Gary Lyle*** explained that a few years ago his neighborhood 7-11 store did not have a ramp. "I went to the manager and asked for one," Lyle said, "and a week later it was there." When Lyle went to a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant, there was a ramp, but a tiny step at the doorway still kept him out. He explained the problem to the manager, and it was soon fixed.

Denise Brown's experience is similar. A few years ago she could not get her wheelchair through the check-out line in a neighborhood grocery store. After she described what she needed, the check-out lane was widened. The same situation existed at a drug store, and the difficulty was solved when she raised the issue to the manager.

Carol Bowen, who gets around on a little motorized "mobie," got results when she told a store owner that she could not shop at his store because the aisles were too narrow for her mobie. "He measured the width of my chair, and then he redid the store," says Bowen. "Now it is completely accessible." Bowen also wanted to be able to get into a roller rink because she had never had a chance to watch her niece and nephew skate. "The owner of the rink put in a ramp, and I was the first to use it," Bowen said.

Until recently ***Joseph Moss***, who is quadriplegic, had to travel to a YMCA 30 miles from his home to obtain the water therapy he needs. So when his own town of Abingdon planned to build a recreation center, Moss and others with disabilities participated in the planning to ensure that ADA standards would be met. "But when the building was completed, and we saw that the lift for the pool was an old-time, hard to use, hydraulic lift, we explained that we needed an automatic lift," he said. "Immediately the town bought the type of lift we recommended," Moss stated.

While self-advocacy efforts are often highly effective, sometimes a little legal muscle is needed to bring about accessibility. For example, when ***Ken Paris*** moved to

Portsmouth two years ago, he found that the nearest medical supply store was not accessible. When Paris spoke with the store owner, he was told that the owner had been trying to get the mall in which the store is located to install a ramp and handicapped parking spaces. Moss then contacted the city government and was told that because of the age of the shopping center, it could not be required to install a ramp or accessible parking. Moss wrote a letter informing the shopping center manager that the center was not in compliance with ADA accessibility guidelines. He then heard from the shopping center that an ADA-experienced contractor had been found. Today that shopping center is equipped with a ramp and handicapped parking.

In addition to shopping and services, employment has also become more accessible, thanks to the ADA. "Had I not known the ADA law I wouldn't have a job now," said ***William Anthony Howard***, a teacher assistant in Norfolk. When an injury left him in a wheelchair and he lost his school custodial job, Howard sought to be rehired. "The school system stalled, even when I met their long list of requirements," Howard recounted. He then contacted the Endependence Center and got help advocating for fair consideration. Howard was hired and he enjoys his work with sixth graders. He also believes his presence in the school makes children and adults alike more aware of disabilities.

Travel is another area in which the ADA has made a difference to many. "After years of staying home, I can finally get out of my house and travel," exclaimed ***Sally Scubin*** of Hampton Roads. ***Donald Fennell***, who lives in Newport News and uses a motorized wheelchair, is pleased that he can take paratransit to the Amtrak station, and can travel from there to Richmond.

There have been numerous other positive changes in the lives of many Virginians as a result of the ADA. "It's the little things that make a difference," stated ***Dorothy Akers***. She appreciates the fact that crosswalk buttons have been lowered, so that people in wheelchairs can use them. "Attitudes have also improved," she reports. "I can more easily ask for help now and get it." ***Geronimo Offutt*** feels

he has benefited from the ADA because " I can now go to the library without running into a lot of barriers." And ***Maureen Hollowell*** pointed out that county government offices in rural areas have been made accessible.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

- Self-advocating is usually the most effective way to get businesses to comply with the ADA.
- Access to public transportation and long distance travel has improved.
- People without disabilities are more understanding and are more willing to help people with disabilities than in the past.
- While society was moving in the direction of greater accessibility before the ADA, the pace of positive change has been much more rapid since the ADA.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

WASHINGTON SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 26, 1995

Host organization: Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment
NCD Member: Mary Raether

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Washington?

A number of Washingtonians told NCD about the many positive ways in which the ADA has affected their lives. Individuals addressed travel--long distance as well as local, the increased accessibility of many communities, and the ADA's impact on the employment of people with disabilities.

Paul Wysocki spoke with delight about the trip he and his wife made in January to Hawaii. "Our 10 days there were great," he said. "The tour buses and trolleys all had lifts, and it felt good to be able to travel like anyone else." Wysocki also pointed out that since the ADA has made people more aware of disabilities, airline passengers arriving at the Seattle-Tacoma airport can easily get an accessible van to nearby hotels.

Cindy Campbell, who traveled for her job before the ADA was enacted, says the difference in hotels' accommodation of deaf people has improved markedly. "Back then the hotels didn't provide flashing lights, vibrating alarm systems, portable smoke detectors, or close captioned TV," says Campbell. Now most of the hotels and motels where Campbell stays are well equipped. "I can watch TV in a hotel, and I feel safe. If there's an emergency, I'll find out about it," Campbell says. "I don't know where

we'd be without the ADA," she added. "Deaf people and people with other disabilities have benefited greatly from it."

Communities are much more accessible than they were not long ago. ***John Evans***, who was raised in rural, eastern Washington, is deaf and has two brothers with disabilities. "When we were growing up, we rarely saw anyone else with a disability," says Evans. His little town of Chelan had no curb cuts, or any other accommodation for anyone with a disability. "But when I go back there now," Evans says, "I see curb cuts, ramps, the relay service, etc. It's a different place."

Seattle, though far different in size than Chelan, has also changed with the ADA and the rise in disability consciousness. ***Melissa Kurtz*** related a story which demonstrates that, despite unexpected barriers, she was still able to make her way in her city independently. Last fall President Clinton came to Seattle for a rally. Kurtz was eager to attend and carefully planned her route. She would park her accessible van in a designated parking space near the Monorail and ride it to a site near the rally where a friend would meet her with her ticket to the event. "When I got to the Monorail, it wasn't operating, for security reasons, but then I couldn't get my van either because it was in an area that had been roped off." Kurtz's only chance to see the President was to wheel her chair to the rally, more than a mile away. Could she do it? Yes, if there were enough curb cuts. "I prayed for curb cuts," she said. "And they were there all the way. I made it!"

Towns all over the state have become more accessible, reports ***Dianne Grace***. "I travel around the state for my job," she says, "but I couldn't do it if it weren't for the ADA. Grace is especially thankful for curb cuts and accessible bathrooms in the towns she visits for her work. "Twenty years ago none of these accommodations existed," she said.

Another individual reported that he is able to do his job because of curb cuts and improvements in transportation. "In my work I transport myself 15-20 miles a day in my power chair," says ***Jeff Grace***. "But I wouldn't be able to go one block

without curb cuts. They're a direct result of ADA." Grace also takes 10 different buses on an average day, all lift-equipped. "And fortunately most of the buildings I need to visit for my work are accessible," Grace noted. "The ADA has allowed me and many others with disabilities to become taxpayers."

Thanks also to the ADA, reasonable accommodation is no longer a nicety but a necessity, Melissa Kurtz explained. "When I need to request an accommodation, the answer does not depend on whether my boss has had a good day or a bad day," she explained.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> Communities are becoming much more accessible to people in wheelchairs, thanks to curb cuts, accessible bathrooms, and improvements in transportation.
>
> People who are hearing impaired have far more access to various activities that others take for granted--going to movies, ordering a pizza, and talking on the phone, to name a few.
>
> People with disabilities have been effective in using the ADA to advocate for accessibility.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

WEST VIRGINIA SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 9, 1995

Host organization: Mountain State Centers for Independent Living NCD Member: Jack Gannon

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in West Virginia?

All who spoke at West Virginia's Town Meeting expressed appreciation for the ADA. Greater access for people with visual disabilities, improved employment opportunities, and efforts by businesses and municipalities to make facilities accessible were some of the outstanding impacts described by presenters.

"The ADA has made a lot of things possible for me that were not possible before," said ***Willis Saunders, a social worker at Huntington State Hospital***. Saunders, who is blind, credits the ADA with giving him access to electronic devices that help him do his job. "I also have access to materials in Braille, so I can keep current with the latest information," he said.

Ninetta Garner agrees that things have gotten better for people with visual impairments. Garner, who teaches at the West Virginia School for the Blind, notices in her travels across the state that "Braille restaurant menus have become more common, and hotels and motels are using better signage." While public transportation is very limited in her area of northeast West Virginia, the area transit authority publishes its schedules in both Braille and large print. "And the large print schedules help senior citizens, as well as people with visual impairments," stated Garner.

Michelle Douglas, who is visually impaired, is pleased with the change in awareness since the ADA's passage. When Douglas moved to Beckley not long ago, she went to a bank to apply for a loan to buy a home. "I was well treated," said Douglas. "Staffers were accommodating and were willing to read everything aloud to me."

Strides have also been made in employment, thanks to the ADA. ***Jerry Ramsey***, who is autistic, credits the ADA with making him aware of the availability of supported employment "and how people with disabilities can get jobs with the help of job coaches."

Amber Glass, an interpreter in southern West Virginia, related that in her area "20-30 people are working who may not have been without the ADA." These people have found meaningful work in supported employment. Glass commended the federal government for passing the ADA, adding that she has seen positive changes in West Virginia as a result. "The ADA is enabling people to speak out for compliance, and it's working," she said.

Tony Miralles has faced extensive discrimination in his search for employment, despite his Masters Degree in Social Work. He has cerebral palsy, and it took more than 50 interviews to finally land a job. But Miralles is not discouraged. "With the passage of the ADA, Title I presents a glimpse of hope for a person with a disability of being assessed for a job on an equal basis. Someday I might have a chance to work in a non-disabled agency," he said.

The ADA has also offered hope of employment to ***David Stewart***. His chronic illness and pain made it hard for him to hold down a job, "but then the ADA came along, and it bolstered my efforts," he said. Stewart, who is also involved with the independent living movement, praised the ADA for giving him an opportunity to work, as well as a way to help others.

Several speakers commented that businesses are working to make their facilities more accessible. "Lots of businesses in Huntington are remodeling in order

to comply with the ADA," stated ***Mike Kolasa***, an independent living center consumer. "And new buildings are being constructed with accessibility in mind," he said. Kolasa notices that salespeople are becoming much more aware of and willing to help people with disabilities.

Kevin Smith agrees that more public accommodations are being made accessible. "Since the ADA became law," he said, "my doctor has had a ramp built to her office."

The City of Morgantown has set up a schedule for the implementation of its ADA transition plan, explained ***Ken Ervin, who works with the West Virginia University-affiliated Center for Developmental Disabilities***. "As a result of the ADA," he said, "we've had the opportunity to educate many people and to work with many people."

Other West Virginia town governments have put in curb cuts, remodeled municipal buildings, moved government offices to accessible buildings, and consulted with people who have disabilities about how best to increase access.

While much remains to be done throughout the state to expand access, the speakers were hopeful. They believe the ADA is the tool they need to advocate effectively for greater accessibility. "The ADA is the best thing that ever happened to people with disabilities," exclaimed ***Jim Farrar***.

Rachel Stewart maintains that the ADA is for everyone, that no one knows when he or she may become disabled. "I went from being able-bodied in one month to having a significant disability that took two years of medication and surgery until I could become employed," she commented.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

More and more businesses have been making their facilities accessible.

Local governments have been working to make their buildings and services accessible to all.

The potential of the ADA for positive change is very great.

The ADA offers hope to many with disabilities that they can become employed.

The attitudes of non-disabled people have become more helpful and understanding.

Many people, with and without disabilities, have been educated about the need to remove barriers to the full participation in society of people with disabilities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

WISCONSIN SUMMARY REPORT
APRIL 13, 1995

Host organizations: Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities
NCD Member: Bonnie O'Day

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Wisconsin?

The enthusiasm of those who testified at Wisconsin's ADA Town Meeting may be summed up in the remark of one college student, "Go ADA!" People especially praised the improvements they have seen in public accommodations, and many spoke about the increased awareness of disabilities on the part of state and local officials and the growth in self-confidence among people with disabilities themselves. And some spoke about employers who are willingly complying with the ADA.

Overall, "the attitude of retail and commercial managers has been good," stated ***Chuck Schmidt*** in written testimony. He believes that after learning about ADA's purpose and how compliance can usually be achieved with minimal cost, businesses usually comply.

Before the ADA, ***Shelley Peterman Schwarz*** related, she could never go shopping. Heavy doors, steps, and a lack of designated parking kept her out of most stores. "I couldn't even shop with my daughter for her first prom dress," related Schwarz. "But things have changed, and I recently did shop with my daughter to buy clothes for her job interview!" she said.

A Milwaukee ice skating rink was recently made accessible, and it was easy to do, reports ***Monica Murphy, an attorney with the Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy***.

Murphy described a large skating facility, with a rink surrounded by a track used by speed skaters. Getting to the rink, she explained, required going downstairs to get under the track and then climbing more steps up to the rink. "There were kids who wanted to use the rink," said Murphy, "who couldn't navigate the stairs. We arranged with the manager to allow them simply to cross the speed skating track, eliminating the barrier of stairs at no cost," she said. "Now kids and others who use wheelchairs can also use the rink, along with everyone else," Murphy said.

A major Madison hotel is doing everything it can to make its services accessible to guests with disabilities, according to ***Gary Tidmore, Guest Services Manager at the Inn on the Park in Madison***, also the site of the Wisconsin ADA Town Meeting. The first time a group came to the hotel and needed equipment for the hearing-impaired, the Inn rented the equipment from another hotel. "Then we purchased our own equipment, with the input of some consumers with hearing impairments," Tidmore said. Today the Inn on the Park is equipped with TTYs, bed shakers, close captioned TV, Brailled menus, emergency evacuation procedures, and a range of wheelchair accessible rooms. "Whenever we book a meeting for an organization, we acquire whatever adaptive equipment is needed if we don't already have it," he said. At the Inn, explained Tidmore, front desk staff are trained in the use of adaptive equipment. "And our business has even increased a little as a result of working with disabilities groups," he said.

Clearly, the ADA has been good for some businesses. And the growing awareness about disabilities in recent years has stimulated entrepreneurs to create new niches. One is custom-made clothing for people with disabilities. In written testimony, ***Donna Ojeda, owner of Done By Design***, described her program that offers onsite tailoring and alterations as well as training to teach tailoring techniques that accommodate a variety of adaptive equipment used by people with disabilities.

A different kind of entity, a monument, was built to be accessible. The Veterans Memorial in Pritchard Park in Racine, dedicated last year, "is completely

accessible by design to meet ADA requirements," stated ***Gus Sorenson***, in a letter. Sorenson is ***Chapter President of the Wisconsin Paralyzed Veterans of America***. "I spoke with several people involved in this project," Sorenson continued, "and they said it was by unanimous consent to create it this way."

State and local government officials and their staff are joining businesses in their awareness of the ADA and their efforts to comply with it, several said. Even though prior federal law called for many of the accommodations required by ADA, the ADA has gotten state and local governments' attention in a way Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act never did, explained ***Dick Pomo*** of Madison. "Officials know the ADA is not a choice; they must comply," he said.

Paul Yochum, a parent of a child with disabilities and Executive Director of the Governor's Committee, said that he has seen school boards pay much more attention to the ADA than they did to 504. "One reason schools and others are paying more attention to the ADA is that it applies to everyone, not just to recipients of federal funds, as 504 does," said Yochum, who is also a member of his local school board. Yochum further pointed out that several recent referenda on schools have called for reasonable accommodations. "That language wouldn't be there if it weren't for the ADA," he said. Yochum believes the ADA has given school systems a better understanding of their obligations under 504.

Several speakers expressed gratitude to the ADA for their increased self-confidence. "A weight was lifted from my shoulders when the ADA passed," commented ***Ken Adell, a student at the University of Wisconsin***. "The ADA has given me the confidence," he said, "that if I work hard and succeed in school, I can expect to find a good job." Even though Adell had rehabilitation legislation backing him when he entered college in 1987, until the ADA passed he worried that no one would hire him after graduation. "Now I know they will," he said.

"The ADA's done a lot for my mental attitude about approaching employers," stated ***Jerry Vogt*** of Madison. "I know you can't legislate confidence, but in a way ADA's done that for me," he said.

Employment, of course, is a major concern to people with disabilities, as it is to most people. And many employers are helping people with disabilities to enable them to use their skills on the job. ***Wendy McLaughlin*** related in a letter that as a deaf employee at McDonald's from 1993-1995, her request for an interpreter at crew meetings was willingly granted. McLaughlin reports that the interpreter was indispensable in enabling her to understand what was going on and also helped her and her coworkers get to know each other better. "My managers used our state telephone relay services to contact me if they needed my help so they wouldn't have to struggle to contact me without the benefit of a relay," McLaughlin wrote.

The Inn on the Park changed its job description for every position in the hotel after meeting with disability advocates to learn what the hotel needed to do to comply with the ADA in its hiring practices, ***Gary Tidmore*** explained.

When it comes to hiring practices, people with psychiatric disabilities are finding that employers are willing to work with them to accommodate their needs, stated ***Tracy Boldt of the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health***. "Some people with psychiatric disabilities need to rearrange work hours, and many employers are working with us on it," Boldt stated.

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

Attitudes toward people with disabilities are improving.

People with disabilities are becoming more self-confident.

Compliance with earlier civil rights legislation for people with disabilities is increasing because of the ADA.

Many businesses are willingly making accommodations to people with disabilities.

Local and long distance transportation available to people with disabilities has improved.

The relay service has greatly expanded communications opportunities for people with hearing impairments.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
50 STATE ADA TOWN MEETING TOUR

WYOMING SUMMARY REPORT
JUNE 2, 1995

Host organization: Governor's Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities

NCD Member: Rae Unziker

What Has the ADA Meant to Citizens in Wyoming?

Wyoming residents are enthusiastic about the ADA. In many areas the Act has affected their lives positively, people told NCD. Access to the relay service, to employment, to public accommodations, and to transportation have changed people's lives for the better.

"To me, the ADA means survival," exclaimed ***Larry Cross***, who depends on the relay service for his livelihood. Cross, who lost his hearing in 1981, recounted that the discrimination he faced was so great that he could not find employment. So since no one would hire him, he bought a business, Wyoming Stone Ground Flour. "The relay is what allows me to stay in business," he said. "How far could anyone get in business if they couldn't use the phone?" he asked. "Communication is the name of the game," said Cross, "regardless of the business you're in, and the relay allows me to have that communication."

Dean Kozner agrees about the importance of the relay. "The relay is the number one benefit to deaf people from the ADA," stated Kozner, who has been deaf for most of his life and has felt socially isolated as a result.

While the ADA-mandated relay service has made a big difference to many people, the employment provisions of the ADA have helped level the playing field, so

that people with disabilities can become gainfully employed taxpayers. In the mid-1970s ***Jim Veatch*** was told that he should become a bookkeeper because he was in a wheelchair. "But I didn't want to be a bookkeeper; I wanted to be an engineer," he said. Much later he did get the engineering training he wanted, and now he works for the Wyoming Department of Transportation. "I have some adaptive equipment," said Veatch, "and I have no difficulty doing my job."

Indeed, most accommodations in the workplace are simple and inexpensive. ***Betty Rasmussen***, who has multiple chemical sensitivities, pointed out that most workplace accommodations cost less than $100.

Some employers have discovered that hiring people with disabilities is good business. ***Steve Harris*** described the efforts of United Parcel Service (UPS) to hire people with disabilities. "With a little adaptive equipment," said Harris, "UPS hired people with disabilities even before the ADA and found them to be willing and hard workers." The ADA has provided encouragement and help in the form of tax credits to such companies to continue their efforts to employ more people with disabilities.

Public accommodations are also becoming more accessible, according to Harris, who is blind. "The ADA has opened so many doors for people with visual handicaps," he said. Harris pointed out that Braille signage in buildings helps him a lot. "Now it's much easier to find the room I'm looking for." Harris explained that before the ADA, when he was staying in a hotel, he had to leave something outside his hotel room door whenever he went out, in order to be able to find the right room when he returned. "And I had to hope nobody moved it while I was out!" he said. But with Braille signage, he can find the room he wants without having to leave himself clues.

A simple thing like finding the men's or women's restroom in a building was once an ordeal for Harris, but it is much easier now. "Once I found the restrooms in a building," said Harris, "I had to hang around to try to listen to other people going in and out of the bathrooms, so I could tell which was the men's!" Harris is glad

things are changing. "With the ADA," he said, "we don't have to give up life. We just change our lifestyle and go on with life."

Hotels have also become more accessible for Larry Cross. "Thanks to the ADA," he said, "when I stay in a hotel I can hear the phone ring, hear the smoke alarm, and hear a knock at the door." Since many hotels and motels are not yet accessible to people with hearing impairments, Cross makes an effort to educate them. "The ADA has allowed my life to be the kind of life that other people take for granted," Cross said. "It makes everything easier."

Hospitals have also become more accessible, according to Betty Rasmussen. When she needed surgery, she explained in advance to the hospital staff about her chemical sensitivities. "They said they needed a few days to get ready for me," she said. "And everything went fine. They were educated and knew what to do and what not to do." The good treatment she received would not have happened without the ADA, she believes.

People with disabilities are not the only ones who benefit from many accessibility changes, according to Rasmussen. "The design features that are done to make buildings accessible to people with disabilities also make buildings more user-friendly for everyone," she pointed out.

In addition to greater access in public accommodations, transportation is also more accessible than it was before the ADA. Jim Veatch, who lives in Cheyenne, said that public transportation never used to be available, "but now I get to work and home on public transit," he said. Even though Veatch owns an accessible van, he prefers to ride the bus. Air travel has also become easier, even though the ADA does not specifically address it. Before the ADA when Veatch attempted to use the airlines, he was told, "We don't allow your kind on the plane." But today it is different. "When I called the airlines to book a flight to Maryland and I told the agent I use a wheelchair, the reaction was, 'Sure, no problem.'"

Clearly, the ADA is bringing about access of all sorts. "And access must be useful to make a difference," remarked ***Michael Funkhouser***. "The ADA offers access that is truly useful."

Common Threads

The following impacts of ADA's first five years were cited by several speakers:

> The relay service has transformed people's lives, especially in the areas of employment and social contact.
>
> Employment is becoming more available to people with disabilities.
>
> Attitudes of non-disabled people have improved a great deal. People are more open to dealing with others who have disabilities.
>
> Now that people with disabilities are better able to get out into the community, they are successfully advocating for themselves.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
A Brief Description of the Americans with Disabilities Act

ADA Requirements

An estimated 49 million Americans with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit daily activities are protected under the ADA. These activities include working, walking, talking, seeing, hearing, or caring for oneself. People who have a record of such an impairment and those regarded as having an impairment are also protected. The ADA has the following five titles:

- Title I -- Employment
- Title II -- Public Services (including Public Transportation)
- Title III -- Public Accommodations and Services Operated by Private Entities
- Title IV -- Telecommunications
- Title V -- Miscellaneous Provisions

The following is a brief summary of some of the major requirements contained in the ADA statute. To determine all of the requirements that a covered entity must satisfy, it is necessary to refer to the regulations, guidelines, and/or technical assistance materials that have been developed by the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (the Access Board). In addition, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has developed regulations on the tax relief available for certain costs of complying with the ADA, such as small business tax credits.

Title I--Employment

Title I of the ADA prohibits discrimination in employment against people with disabilities. It requires employers to make reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified applicant or employee, unless such accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the employer. Reasonable accommodations include such actions as making worksites accessible, modifying existing equipment, providing new devices, modifying work schedules, restructuring jobs, and providing readers or interpreters.

Title I also prohibits the use of employment tests and other selection criteria that screen out, or tend to screen out, individuals with disabilities, unless such tests or criteria are shown to be job-related and consistent with business necessity. It also bans the use of pre-employment medical examinations or inquiries to determine if an applicant has a disability. It does, however, permit the use of medical examinations after a job offer has been made if the results are kept confidential, all persons offered employment in the same job category are required to take them, and the results are not used to discriminate.

Employers are permitted, at any time, to inquire about the ability of a job applicant or employee to perform job-related functions. Under the ADA, the employment provisions took effect on July 26, 1992, for employers with 25 or more employees, and will take effect on July 26, 1994, for employers with 15 or more employees. As required, the EEOC issued its regulations by July 26, 1991.

Title II--Public Services

Title II of the ADA requires that the services and programs of local and state governments, as well as other nonfederal government agencies, are accessible to people with disabilities. Regulations from the Attorney General's office at DOJ were issued on July 26, 1991, in compliance with the ADA.

In addition, Title II seeks to ensure that people with disabilities have access to transportation. All new buses must now be accessible. Transit authorities must provide supplementary paratransit services or other special transportation services for individuals with disabilities who cannot use fixed-route bus services, unless this would present an undue burden.

In the area of rail transportation, the ADA requires that all new rail vehicles and all new rail stations must be accessible. In addition, existing rail systems must have one accessible car per train within five years of enactment. Amtrak must make all of its existing stations accessible within 20 years. Key stations of subway systems and other commuter rail systems must generally be accessible within three years. Regulations from the Secretary of DOT were due on July 26, 1991, but were somewhat delayed.

Title III--Public Accommodations

Public accommodations include the broad range of entities that affect commerce, including sales, rental, and service establishments; educational institutions; recreational facilities; and social service centers. The ADA prohibits the use of eligibility criteria that screen out or tend to screen out individuals with disabilities, unless necessary for the delivery of goods and services. It also requires public accommodations to make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures, unless those modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the services provided by the public accommodation.

Title III also requires that public accommodations provide auxiliary aids necessary to enable persons who have visual, hearing, or sensory impairments to participate in the program, but only if their provision will not result in an undue burden on the business. Thus, for example, a restaurant would not be required to provide menus in braille for blind patrons if it requires its waiters to read the menu. The auxiliary aid requirement is flexible. A public accommodation may choose among various alternatives as long as the result is effective communication.

With respect to existing facilities of public accommodations, physical barriers must be removed when it is "readily achievable" to do so (i.e., when it can be accomplished easily and without much expense). Modifications that would be readily achievable in most cases include ramping of a few steps. However, all construction of new facilities and alterations of existing facilities in public accommodations, as well as in commercial facilities such as office buildings, must be accessible to people with disabilities (except that elevators generally are not required for facilities that are less than three stories high or have less than 3,000 square feet per story).

Regulations on public accommodations and commercial facilities from the Attorney General's office were issued on July 26, 1991. Title III also addresses transportation provided by private entities, and regulations on this component were issued by the Secretary of DOT on September 6, 1991.

Title IV--Telecommunications

Title IV of the ADA amends the Communications Act of 1934 to require that telephone companies provide telecommunication relay services. The relay services must permit speech- or hearing-impaired individuals who use TTDs or other nonvoice terminal devices opportunities for communication that are equivalent to those provided to other customers. Regulations were issued by the FCC on August 1, 1991.

Title V--Miscellaneous Provisions

This title addresses such issues as the ADA's relationship to other laws including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, requirements relating to the provision of insurance, regulations by the Access Board, prohibition of state immunity, inclusion of Congress as a covered entity, implementation of each title, promotion of alternative means of dispute resolution, and provision of technical assistance.

APPENDIX B
A Brief Description of the National Council on Disability

Overview and Purpose

The National Council on Disability is an independent Federal agency led by 15 members appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. The National Council was initially established in 1978 as an advisory board within the Department of Education (Public Law 95-602). The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1984 (Public Law 98-221) transformed the National Council into an independent agency.

The overall purpose of the National Council is to promote policies, programs, practices, and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability; and to empower individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society.

Specific Duties

The current statutory mandate of the National Council includes the following:

* Reviewing and evaluating, on a continuing basis, policies, programs, practices, and procedures concerning individuals with disabilities conducted or assisted by Federal departments and agencies, including programs established or assisted under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, or under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act; and all statutes and regulations pertaining to Federal programs which assist such individuals with disabilities in order to assess the effectiveness of such policies, programs, practices, procedures, statutes, and regulations in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities;

* Reviewing and evaluating, on a continuing basis, new and emerging disability policy issues affecting individuals with disabilities at the Federal, State, and local levels, and in the private sector, including the need for and coordination of adult services, access to personal assistance services, school reform efforts and the impact of such efforts on individuals with disabilities, access for health care, and policies that operate as disincentives for the individuals to seek and retain employment.

* Making recommendations to the President, the Congress, the Secretary of Education, the Director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, and other officials of Federal agencies, respecting ways to better promote equal opportunity, economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society for Americans with disabilities.

* Providing the Congress, on a continuing basis, advice, recommendations, legislative proposals, and any additional information which the Council or the Congress deems appropriate;

* Gathering information about the implementation, effectiveness, and impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.);

* Advising the President, the Congress, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services within the Department of Education, and the Director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research on the development of the programs to be carried out under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended;

* Providing advice to the Commissioner with respect to the policies of and conduct of the Rehabilitation Services Administration;

* Making recommendations to the Director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research on ways to improve research, service, administration, and the collection, dissemination, and implementation of research findings affecting persons with disabilities;

* Providing advice regarding priorities for the activities of the Interagency Disability Coordinating Council and reviewing the recommendations of such Council for legislative and administrative changes to ensure that such recommendations are consistent with the purposes of the Council to promote the full integration, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities;

* Preparing and submitting to the President and the Congress a report entitled *National Disability Policy: A Progress Report* on an annual basis; and

* Preparing and submitting to the Congress and the President a report containing a summary of the activities and accomplishments of the Council on an annual basis.

Population Served and Current Activities

While many government agencies deal with issues and programs affecting people with disabilities, the National Council is the only Federal agency charged with addressing, analyzing, and making recommendations on issues of public policy which affect people with disabilities regardless of age, disability type, perceived employment potential, economic need, specific functional ability, status as a veteran, or other individual circumstance. The National Council recognizes its unique opportunity to facilitate independent living, community integration, and employment opportunities for people with disabilities by assuring an informed and coordinated approach to addressing the concerns of persons with disabilities and eliminating barriers to their active participation in community and family life.

The National Council plays a major role in developing disability policy in America. In fact, it was the Council that originally proposed what eventually became the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Our present list of key issues includes monitoring progress toward the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the development of a comprehensive national disability policy.

Appendix C: Locations and Dates of the Town Meetings

STATE	LOCATION	DATE	HOST ORGANIZATION
Alabama	Birmingham	02/14/95	Birmingham Independent Living Center
Alaska	Anchorage	04/25/95	Access Alaska/ADA Partners Project
Arizona	Phoenix	05/06/95	Arizona Office for Americans with Disabilities
Arkansas	Little Rock	02/21/95	Office of Disability, Arkansas Department of Health, Prevention and Arkansas ADA Roundtable
California	Los Angeles	03/01/95	Westside Center for Independent Living and California Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons
Colorado	Denver	05/26/95	ADAPT
Connecticut	Hartford	03/29/95	Independence Unlimited
D.C.	Washington	06/05/95	DC Center for Independent Living
Delaware	Dover	03/02/95	Delaware Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
Florida	Miami	02/01/95	Metro Dade Disability Services
Georgia	Atlanta	02/04/95	Georgia ADA Exchange
Hawaii	Honolulu	02/28/95	Hawaii Center for Independent Living
Idaho	Boise	04/27/95	The Idaho Task Force on the Americans with Disabilities Act

Locations and Dates of the Town Meetings (cont'd)

STATE	LOCATION	DATE	HOST ORGANIZATION
Illinois	Chicago	06/01/95	Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities
Indiana	Indianapolis	04/25/95	Indiana State Steering Committee, and the Institute for the Study of Developmental Disabilities
Iowa	Des Moines	04/11/95	Iowa Commission of Persons with Disabilities
Kansas	Topeka	02/15/95	Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns
Kentucky	Frankfort	02/07/95	Kentucky Department of Employment Services
Louisiana	New Orleans	02/16/95	University of New Orleans, Division of Public Service Training
Maine	Portland	03/16/95	Alpha One Center for Independent Living
Maryland	Baltimore	05/09/95	Maryland State Department of Education/Maryland Rehabilitation Center
Massachusetts	Boston	03/22/95	Boston Center for Independent Living
Michigan	Detroit	03/30/95	Great Lakes Center for Independent Living, and Oakland Macomb Center for Independent Living
Minnesota	St. Paul	05/10/95	Minnesota State Council on Disability
Mississippi	Jackson	02/02/95	Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities
Missouri	Jefferson City	04/12/95	Governor's Council on Disability

Locations and Dates of the Town Meetings (cont'd)

STATE	LOCATION	DATE	HOST ORGANIZATION
Montana	Missoula	04/13/95	Alliance for Disability and Students of the University of Montana
Nebraska	Lincoln	05/09/95	League of Human Dignity
Nevada	Las Vegas	05/03/95	Nevada Rehabilitation Division/Community-Based Service
New Hampshire	Concord	03/17/95	Granite State Independent Living Center
New Jersey	Wanamassa	03/15/95	New Jersey DD Council; Association for County Offices on the Disabled; DIAL Independent Living Centers; Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
New Mexico	Albuquerque	02/17/95	New Mexico Governor's Committee on Concerns of the Handicapped
New York	Albany	03/24/95	New York Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
North Carolina	Winston-Salem	04/28/95	Programs for Accessible Living
North Dakota	Bismarck	06/14/95	Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
Ohio	Columbus	04/04/95	Ohio Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	02/21/95	Oklahoma City Mayor's Committee on Disability Concerns
Oregon	Portland	04/21/95	Oregon Disabilities Commission
Pennsylvania	Harrisburg	03/10/95	Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; PA Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities; PA State Independence Living Council

Locations and Dates of the Town Meetings (cont'd)

STATE	LOCATION	DATE	HOST ORGANIZATION
Rhode Island	Cranston	03/21/95	Rhode Island Governor's Commission on the Handicapped
South Carolina	Columbia	02/09/95	South Carolina Protection & Advocacy for the Handicapped
South Dakota	Rapid City	06/08/95	Western Resources for dis-Abled Independence; South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities
Tennessee	Nashville	04/06/95	Coalition for Tennesseans with Disabilities
Texas	Arlington	02/22/95	Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities; Arlington and Irving Mayor's Committee's on People with Disabilities
Utah	Salt Lake City	05/03/95	Utah ADA Consortium
Vermont	Montpelier	04/14/95	Vermont Center for Independent Living
Virgin Islands	St. Croix	06/19/94	Virgin Islands Advocacy Agency; Virgin Islands Disabilities & Rehabilitation Council; University of the Virgin Islands Cooperative and Extension Service
Virginia	Norfolk	03/07/95	Endependence Center
Washington	Seattle	04/26/95	Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment
West Virginia	Sutton	03/09/95	Mountain State Centers for Independent Living

Locations and Dates of the Town Meetings (cont'd)

STATE	LOCATION	DATE	HOST ORGANIZATION
Wisconsin	Madison	04/13/95	Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities
Wyoming	Cheyenne	06/02/95	Wyoming Cross-Disability Coalition

APPENDIX D
Speakers at the 52 State ADA Town Meeting Tour[1]

• ALABAMA

Peggy Anderson
Beulah Brown
Cheryl Bullock
Penny Burt
Beth Butler
Michael Davis
Bill Freeman
Jurvis Grenscher
Bill Hecker
Dana Isbell
Hope Kelley
Stella Kellum
Ann Marshall
Mark Mitchell
Kevin Orr
Chris Paine
Ann Pal
Don Patrick
Michelle Pelham
Kay Phillips
Elizabeth Ray
Sam Redburn
Evie Sheetz
Don Sims
Graham Sisson
Chantelle Sonnier
Kirk Tcherneshoff
Drew Weldon

• ALASKA

Jim Beck
Rebecca Campbell
Gretchen Collier
Virginia Cumming
Chris Daughhetee
Duane French
Earl Fullingim
Janet Helen Gamble
Nugget Hiatt
Steven Johnson
Lynne Koral
Gene Merrick
Sherri Morton
Art Palileo
Tony Rauh
Patrick Reinhart
Mary Elizabeth Rider
Natasha Smith
Rick Tessandore
Karen Wood
John Woodward
Janel Wright

• ARIZONA

Brent Beals
Mary Busfield
Guerry Dalrymple
Rich Halverson
Rex Kent
Todd Kimball
Robert Lynch

---

[1] We have endeavored to spell speakers' names correctly. Some were difficult to read on sign-in sheets. While hosts at the town meetings worked hard to ensure correct spelling, we apologize for any errors. Some speakers' names are not listed due to lack of identification at the start of their story.

Robert Lynch
Michele Martinez
Donna Redford
Denise Thompson
Michael Ubowski
Susan Castle Webb
Jeff Werner

• **ARKANSAS**

Sandra Brent
Ann Garner
John Gould
Bonnie Johnson
Dale Kennedy
Anthony Minyard
Mike Morrissey
Gwen Winston

• **CALIFORNIA**

Seymour Bernstein
Guillermo Perdoma Camo
John Carpenter
Irene Charlton
Karen Duncanwood
Brian Hearn
Christina Keefer
Claudia Lenoir--for
Frances Means, Michael Williams
Martha Long
Ben Mattlin
Ray Louis McKeever
Ray Morales
Lillibeth Navarro
Shawn Cassey O'Brien
Audrey Parker
Elizabeth Pazdral
Sylvia Pryzwiecki
Armentres Ramsay
Mary Ann Rays reading letter from
Senator Diane Feinstein
Laura Schultz-Childs
Marc Stern
Grace Tiessen
Alan Toy

• **COLORADO**

Sophia Abeyta
Anita Cameron
Rhonda Delbacchio
Sue Elsgood
Julie Farrar
Penny Ford
Bruce Gougen
Faith Gross
Diana Kovac
Clarence Miller
Les Reed
Latanya Reeves
George Roberts
John Roberts
Bob Samores
Russell Sarazen
Mark Simon
Peter Splaine
Robin Stephens

• **CONNECTICUT**

Mel Alberts
Ruth Cion
Lauren Esposito
Mark Gallucci
Nan Geissler
James Kay
Barbara Kohl
Stan Kosloski
Shirley Krassner
Sue LaChance
Julie Meyer
Barbara Monty
Carolyn Newcombe
Debbie Sampson
Marcia Smith-Glasper
Steve Spillane

Ann Walton

• DELAWARE

Bob diCarlo
Peggy Eddens
Larry Field
Missy Grimaldi
Linda Heller
Larry Henderson
Gerard Landreth
Donna Miller
Bob Osgood
Loretta Sarro
Diane Treacy

• DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

George Aguehounde
Sheila Armstrong
Brunilda Batista
Bonita Curtis
Jennifer Dodd
Gregory Dougan
Luethel Gavin
Dora Giraldo
Andy Imparato
Evelyn Jackson
Ann Johnson
Tom Kober
Cornell Mersies
David Nelson
John O'Rourke
Pedro Perez
Tony Rhodes
Karen Salva
Katie Savage
Linda Strating
Angela Vaughn
Zuzu Vivera
Katherine Williams
Alfredia Young

• FLORIDA

Linda Allison
Barbara Bernhardt
Eduardo Bernones
Michael Brennan
Danny Carbohol
Eric Delisle
Maggie Fermin
Maria Fernandez
Gale Fox
Jeffrey Harris
Don Holder
Jack Humburg
Janet Jackson
Edward Kilty
Robert Lessnee
Mildred Levinson
Michael Messer
Bill Norcunez
Sergio Renden
Diana Richardson
Angelina Rodriguez
Cecilia Segundo
Mark Seldon
Julie Shaw
Scott Vistel
Norman Wiggon

• GEORGIA

Carol Ashe
Anthony Barriga
Bonnie Bonham
Adrena Clegg
Tony Cordova
Jill Crowe
Linda Davis
Nancy Desmond
Nancy Duncan
Marcia Gitter
Linda Hawkins
Don Hill
Carol Hughes
Marcell Johnson

Marie Latta
Debbie Livingston
Pamela Lloyd
Sandy Marchman
Fred Moss
Elizabeth Patrick
Justin Pressley
Dennis Price
Linda Priest
Susan Sherman
Adam Shapiro
Margie Staton
Jesse Tyler
Stephanie Wells

• HAWAII

Philip Ana
JoAnne Bosserdet
Kristie Hall
Cindy McCoy
John McKenzie (written)
Darin Mishima
Lourdes Mugas
Mark Obatake
Michael Tada
Michelle Williamson
Scott Youngblood
Chrissy Zukerkorn

• IDAHO

Bobby Ball
Don Collins
Marcie Dale
Richard Gallaghen
Sue Harms
Henry Henscherd
Roger Howard
Walter Jastremsky
Dorothy Shipman

• ILLINOIS

Barbara Anderson
Ken Anderson
Ron Arneson
Edward Bannister
Heidi Barker
Karen Bartler
Thomas Benziger
Bill Bisaillon
Ray Campbell
Christine Carter
Jim Charlton
Michael Conroy
Cindy Cramer
Jim Davies
Connie Duffin
Susan Firnhaber
Patricia Flannery
Ann Ford
Larry Gorski
Linda Hernandez
Eleanor Hjort
Herbert Hoffman
Jo Holzer
Linda Hunt
Joyce Klein
Steve Klokkenga
Pat Lee
Cathy Lutkin-Muehl (written)
Jim McGovern
Kerry Moore
Father Joseph Mulcrone
Carlos Paraskeras
Stan Rich
Judy Savage
Beverly Stange-Elliott
Fred Stark
Julie Thurber
Theresa Woznicki

• **INDIANA**

Richard Armstrong
David Arvey
David Bice
Sharon Byrkett (read by another)
Joe DuPree
Ric Edwards
Frank Epperson
Roy Garcia
Russell Goode
Rita Renae Gould
George Kirles (read by another)
Johnny Mazurkewicz
Tony Myers
Eve Minton
Mark Minzes
Carolyn Niehaus
Judith Rasmuson
Ben Ratell
David Reynolds
Suzie Rimstidt (read by another)
Yo Sampson
Jodie San Pietro
Janna Shisler
Larry Snyder
Alan Spaulding
John Jay Steinhardt
Cara Beth Thomas (read by another)
Karin Vaughn
Wyan Watkins
Kristin Willison
Karen Willison
Nancy Winters

• **IOWA**

Mr. Bell
Kevin Burt
Mike Hanick
Janice Hawkins
Terry Holberg
William Kautzky
Jill Krauss
Jim Larson
Laura Nurs
Dave O'Brien
Jill Robinson
John Snyder
Lois Mary Sprague
John TenPas
Fred Wagner

• **KANSAS**

Ed Brungardt
Jo Ann Buche
Carolyn Burke
Michelle Campbell
Avia Cole
Susan Cook
Kenneth Golden
Margaret Hahn
Brenda Henry
Ed Herrick
Jeri Johnson
Sharon Joseph
Jim Kleinsorge
Lou Ann Kohl
Bob Milkesik
Alan Post
Amy Ritter
Tom Robinson
Teresa Rundell
Jeff Simon
Jeri Strange
Ron Thomas
Michael Todd
Art Turner
Vicki Tyler
Tom Whalen
Glen White
Allison Wolters

• **KENTUCKY**

Diane Brewer
Wayne Brock
Danny Carroll

Sharon Fields
Howard Fuetterer
Susanne Hoffman
Roy Sidon
Charlie Sims
Sheila Tipton
Bill Wells
MaryAnne Westerdale
Jerry Wheatley

• LOUISIANA

Aileen Adams
CaraLee Adams
Mark Bahan
Loretta Brown
Della Mae Childress
Donna Clark
James Forrestal
Kathryn Hoover
Mrs. W. B. Hurst
Jane Jackson
Pat Johnson
Ellen Jones
Mary LeBlanc
Brian Lee
Lynette Linker
Esther McAllister
Anne McLaine
Yadi Mark
Leslie Palmer
Carine Thomas
Tobin Trahan
Fleming Trosclair
Charles Tubre
Steven Watkins

• MAINE

Laurie Brink
Carl Burnett
Julie Cadner
Jeanie Caltart
Jan deVinney
Jim Donald
Jennifer Eckle
Kathleen Egan
Deborah Gardner
Ron Hanson
Susan Harkins
Mike Harmon
Nancy Hilsman
Beth Leach
Cindy Leach
Kim Livingstone
Barbara Macomber
Kathy McGuinness
Grace McKenna
Bob McPhee
Sharon Miller
Cliff Rowe
James Seavey (written)
Robert Sudheimer
Patricia Wescott
Deborah Williams
Ralph Williams

• MARYLAND

Ronald Baxter
Karen Beever
Marsha Dryden
Rhonda Elsey-Jones
Roger Harrison
Kerby Hill
Michael Holt
Alfred Jackson
Leopold Linton
Robert Moors
Bonnie Noel
Joan Ross
David Scott
Jessica Skintges
Martha Smith
Walter Truelove
Mary Young

• **MASSACHUSETTS**

Lisa J. Berke
Judi Chamberlin
Pat Dolan
Phil Dow
Stanley Eichner
Fred Fay
Musheer Hasan
Denise Karuth
Jean Lemieux
Michael Muehe
Peter Myette
Pat Ryan
Butch Towne
Mary Wambach
Charlie Washburn
John Winske

• **MICHIGAN**

Donald Anderson
Agnes Bellel
Willy Brown
John Roy Castillo
Maria Cebreco
Larry Dilworth
Mario Elliott
George Entry
Sherry Fernandez
Marsha Florence
Barbara Ford
Nancy Fountain
Ann Greco
Mohammed Hanif
Jeff Herrin
Kathy Herron
Angela Hoff
Art Humphrey
Claudie Jones
Hattie Kirk
Larry Patton
Janice Pegg
Chuck Roberts
Michelle Rose
Walt Runchey
Nelis James Saunders
Paul Ulrich
Richard Whitelaw
Quinton Williams

• **MINNESOTA**

Scott Anderson
Mike Arieta
Dorothy Balen
Jim Baxter
Melissa Beilke
Gene Chelberg
Bobbi Cordano
Randall Doane
Martha Godby
Kathy Hagen
Marjorie Hammargren
Harold Kievel
Kay Kramer
Deborah Leuchovious
Lolly Lijewski
Kathy Mullarky
Dale Palton
Mike Parish
Michael Patrick
Eric Peterson
Cliff Poetz
Jim Ramnaraine
Marj Schneider
Gary Smolik
Danny Spalla
Gloria Steinberg
Sharon Van Winkle
Marlene Voita
Joan Walsh
John Walsh
Linda Wofford
Michael Zeledon

• **MISSISSIPPI**

Kay Alexander
Linda Atwood
Charles Auden
Randy Blackburn
John Brown
Jan Cloud
David Courtney
Kimball Gray
Kathy Harper
David James
Nancy Mears for Charlie Carver
Mark Palmer
Barry Phillips
Nellie Ray
Donna Smith
Albert S. Tusing
Evelyn Williams

• **MISSOURI**

Don Arnold
Mary Branham
Jim Crabtree
Lucille Fierce
Leslie Hall
Lee Henson
Gay Jones
Jim Jordan
Janice Kelly
Darrell Lauer
Veronica Lieb
Jeff McGarry
Denise Morrow
David Newburger
Nellie Owen
Judith Parker
Randolph Scott
William Sheldon
John Simmons
Steve Skolnick
Terry Starkey
Teresa Stutes-O'Neal
Jim Tuscher
Annelle Weymuth
Marjorie Yates

• **MONTANA**

Nancy Borgmann
Dan Burke
John Collins
Dixie Dischonn
David Donaldson
Brian Faulkner
Robert Gregory
Joe Harrington
Curtis Hayes
Joe Kadisco
Flo Keewell
Peter Leech
Rick Love
Christi Madsen
Jim Marks
Randy Modrell
Mary Morrison
Fred Reed
Michael Regnier
Merle Swanson

• **NEBRASKA**

Charles Beardslee
Mark Booth
Christi Coleman
Jack Conrad
Sid Cook
Stan Dinkelman
Robert Doulas
Sarah Fleck
Arlene Fox
Mary Gordon
Kathy Hall
Paul Heers
Tim Kolb
Norman Laverka
Sherry Manthe
Ken Mayberry

Dwain McLaughlin
John Moss
Rebecca Peterson
Mark Quinn
Jocelyn Ritchie
Ivan Ruchivesky
William Rush
Kathy Soflin
Merwyn Vavrina
Norman Weverka

• NEVADA

Jason Arceneaux
Reggie Bennett
Kathryn Black
Joe Bole
George Brown
Eleanor Crawford
Bill Eddens
Ron Erickson
Teresa Fuller
Paul Gowens
Bill Hamilton
Bob Hogan
Fred Inman
Mac Johnson
Rosetta Johnson
Jesse Kent
Danny Kern
Dana Lescher
Jim Maddox
Rod Malcolm
Beverly Perry
Diane Randall
Michelle Rico
Jackie Ridley
Andrew Smith
Peggy Smith
Sam Swanson
Randy Tower
June Tweedle
Scott Young

• NEW HAMPSHIRE

Dee Clanton
Richard Daigle
Dean Davis
Laurie de Mayo
Roberta Gallant
Ronald Giovagnoli
Tom Hanson
Joe Hardz
Robin Harrell
Jeanie Kincaid
John Kotios
Pam Locke
Lisa Lyens
Mary McGuire
Angela Officer
Barbara Parnell
Lee Perseley
Walter Plummer
Mark Race
Penny Ranger
Willemainscha Ranger
Judith Raskin
Donna Renard
Linda Riley
David Robas
Donna Marie Sorrentino
Nancy Martell-Stevenson
Jim Sullivan
Kelly Tracy
Laura Tucker
Frank Vincinguerra
Carol Williams

• NEW JERSEY

David Alteer
William Butler
Jessy Cook
Susan Elmer
Huntley Forrester
Colleen Fraser
Shirley Frederick
Kathleen Gregg

Ann Jamison
Darlene La Rue
Stanley Soden
Jackie Stearns
Rick Treano
Pablo Viera
Linda Wilson

• NEW MEXICO

Robert Burns
Norman Dawson
Sandra Dement
Richard Hammond
Kevin Irvine
Cliff McKinnon
Lester Miller
Art Schreiber
Greg Trapp
Hazel Wadsworth

• NEW YORK

Susan Ahlquist
Kevin Brown
Judy Dunbar
Laura Hagen
Sally Johnston
Kristin King
Barbara Kohn
Andrew Kovalovich
Carol Kriss
Howard LePiors
Matt Marino (written)
Michelle Massiano
Mary Beth Metzger
Claudia Morgan
Kitty Occhino (written)
Pat Peebles
Clifton Perez
Mike Roselle
Ralph Shields
Karen Steitler (written)
Anne Wasserstrom

• NORTH CAROLINA

Bill Ach
Barbara Benge
Jeffrey Bittner
Peggy Brooks
Dana Daniell
Ann Davidson
Ken Franklin
David Goines
Kay Hartgrove
Mr. Hickmon (written)
Brenda Heinz (written)
Mary Sloan Jones
Annette Lauber
Andy Leach
Nelson Malloy
Jim McCulley
Paul Miller
Chet Mottershead
Don Nichols (written)
Sandra Perry
Mike Phillips
Larry Pope
Margaret Rogers (written)
Julia Sain (written)
Doris Schultz
Terry Schupbach-Gordon
Francenia Smith
John Taylor
Sylvia Taylor
Jacob Thadathil
Paranita Towson
Jeannie Wolf

• NORTH DAKOTA

Marie Brown
Bob Cleveland
April Crane
Norma Deichler
Deb Dilger
Miles Erickson
Darrell Farland
Laurie French

Rich Grey
Wanda Guyer
Pat Knutson
Madonna Logosv
Audrey Meadow
Chuck Stebbins
Robin Werre

• OHIO

Fatica Ayers
John Benson
Mary Mooney Biel
Dawn Caldwell
Ken Campbell
Ann Christopher
Elsie Danovich
Jerry Droll
Ann Gazelle
Gale Gross
Tim Harrington
Brad Hollys
Irwin Hott
Ray Jones
Vera Jones
Pat Kelley
Kim Lavalle
Bob McCallum
Marsha Nippert
Patti Reeble
Jane Smith
Jerry Snyder
John Wall
David Wilkin
David Williams

• OKLAHOMA

Cathy Ames
Roger Barton
Jean Jones
Helen Kootz
George Lewis
Kit Phillips
Thelma Rex
Kenny Violette

• OREGON

Judy Arnsmeyer
Michael Bailey
Carol Barker
Rachel Cranson
T. J. Davis
Jeanine Delauney
Louis Hall
Cheryl Johnson Hoare
William Hoare
Dave Hulse
Steve Kreutzer
Sandra Kutz
John Liggett
Don Meyers
Kathy Monahan
Patricia Nielson
Jim Ringelberg
Linnae Rutledge
Michael van der Kamm
Susan Zarnek

• PENNSYLVANIA

Winston Alcendor
Frederick Bertz
Theo Braddy
Cheryl Brand
Rev. Walter Brandon
Ruth Brinton
Thomas Burns
Josie Byzek
Edward Chepheovich
Thomas Coulston
Jeremy Courtois
Jerome Davis
Lou Diehl
Michael Donmoyer
David Engel
Howard Ervin

Joan Fenicle
David Golin
Jo Halberstadt
Richard Harkins
Leslye Herrmann
Lisa Janoff
Leslie Kelly
Marty Kester
Phyllis Koster
Sylvia Martin
Alber Mertz
Woody Osburn
Steve Pennington
Jim Penta
Tim Price
Joanna Raver
Linda Riegel
Danielle Sheypeck
Dee Sheypeck
Ralph Trainer
Janet Wolf

• RHODE ISLAND

Bonnie Abols
Shira Bobrove
Fred Burke
Bruce Bucci
Ed Carmel
Marie Corcelli
Sue de Simone
Bill Emmett
Robert Gearing (written)
Bob Geller
Donald Jacques
Andrew Knight
John Kozakiewicz
James Litvack
Patricia Martin
Karen Nelson
Teresa Nickerson
Lorna Ricci
Edward Schroeder
Greg Solas
John Sousa
Jeremy Vandall
Beth Wilson

• SOUTH CAROLINA

Lorene Arnett
Rena Burnside
Michelle Busick
Donald Byrd
Maxie Connor
Evelyn Evans
Wes Gibbs
Chip Harraford
Eleanor Hawkins
Suzanne McDermott
Rebecca Michaelsick
Jeff Miller
M. North
Louise Plaster
David Reeves
Phyllis Ross
Lewis Stevens
Linda Van Deusen

• SOUTH DAKOTA

Scotty Backens
Brandi Brooks
Audrey Cherrette
Pat Czerny
Kathy Ertel
Venaline Gogue
Dick Hicks
Pam High
Tari Kilian
Sandy Magnavito
Don Michlitsch
Laura Moeding
Shelly Pfaff
Patti Rudge
Shelly Schock
Hyatt Simpson
Terresa Thompson
Lauren Tolberg

• **TENNESSEE**

Glen Barr
Larry Breneman
Wynelle Carson
Christina Champoneria
James Davis
Paul Drake
Kenton Dickerson
Bill Frisk (written)
Paul Gibson
Kristopher Hazard
Sharon Hazard
Giacomo 'Jock' Lijoi
Mike Lozynsky
Dane McCary
Michael McDonald
John Meeks
Ian Miller
Ricky Moore
Jackie Page
Nick Pride
Sherry Rademacher
Mike Seal
Susan Stacy
Floyd Stewart
Marty Walker

• **TEXAS**

Olivia Alexander
Betty Black
Joe Bontke
Kimberly Bunting
Adele Campbell
Renee Davis
Angela Earhart
Diane Emery
Julie Espinoza
Mike Ficke
Dan Gadbury
David Gentry
Jim Grey
Christina Hollis
Linda Johnstone
Tom Justice
Robert Langford
Ramona Long
Libby Lonzara
Emily Magnuson
Johnny Martinez
Steve Mayhew
Danny Moss
Lee Neal
Clark Porter
Joe Rivas
Juliet Rizzo
Ralph Rouse
Donna Rowland
Jonas Schwartz
Brian Smith
Larry Stiff
Frankie Swearingen
Patricia Talley
Ron Troole
Marti Van Ravensway
R. A. Wade
Rodney Williams

• **UTAH**

Brad Baxter
Roger Borgenicht
Lori Brock
Camille Call
Marilyn Call
Brian Dale
Holly Foster
Mary Pat Friedman
Jack Green
Pete Groesbeck
Anna Jensen
Ricki Landers
Ted Loosli
J. Stephen Mikita
Page Petrucka
Mark Renda
Bibian Rendon
Gordon Richins
Corey Rowley

Arlene Thomas
Barbara Toomer

• VERMONT

Morgan Brown
Cornelia Carey
Judy Dixon
Ron Gonya
Yolanda Henry
Tom Hombar
Chris Jones
Larry Jones
Madeline Loneghan
David Saghy
John Schulenberger
Frank Shiner
Rita Straubhaum
Rene Tellerin
David Timson
Craig Whipple

• VIRGIN ISLANDS

Camille Ayala
Lucina Bartlette
Hyacinth Bendix
Stephanie Cott-Williams
Phyllis Cornwell
Wilma Espinoza
Howard Fishbein
George Flores
Alicia Francis
Paulinus Gentius
Mary Godet
Vanessa Higginbotham
Carmen Huertas
J.A. Johnson
Astrid Jones
Sylvester Julien
Jameel Muhammad
Pat Nobbie
David Obando
Gladys Perez
Stephanie Scott-Williams
Sheila Smith
Mark Vinzant
Roy Williams

• VIRGINIA

Dorothy Akers
Juanita Blake
Marcy Boone
Carol Bowen
Denise Brown
John Cartier
Richard Dipeppe
Paul Dodge
Robert Eggers
Donald Fennell
Jim Gimball
Anne Good
Linda Harris
Ulrika Harrison
Maureen Hollowell
Patrick Horran
William Anthony Howard
Gary Lyle
Sandi Moore
Joseph Moss
Geronimo Offutt
Ken Paris
Joan Patterson
Loretta Quesinberry
Sally Scubin
Patrina Spruill
Paul Staples
Carolyn Walker
Robert Webb

• WASHINGTON

Andrew Bergman
Cindy Campbell
John Denoyer
William Elliott
John Evans

Dianne Grace
Jeff Grace
Susan Greathouse
Melissa Kurtz
Stephanie Landaas
Denise Mackenstad
Wiley Marks
Jim Morris
Marla Nonken
Stan Ordonlaf
Bernice Robinson
Lyn Sowdon
Pat Troxell
Vonne Worth
Paul Wysocki
Glenn Young

• WEST VIRGINIA

Bob Daniels
Michelle Douglas
Ken Ervin
Jim Farrar
Ninetta Garner
Amber Glass
Cindy Hipes
Mike Kolasa
John Lipscomb
Tammy Marcum
Ann Meadows
Tony Miralles
James Qualls
Jerry Ramsey
Jan Rieger
Willis Saunders
Donna Spellman
Kevin Smith
David Stewart
Rachel Stewart
Linda Veid
Ron Yost
Genny Zbach

• WISCONSIN

Brad Adams
Ken Adell
Tracy Boldt
Jack Hathaway
Travis Hildebrand
Jean Kemmerer
Virginia Korleski
Larry Lajoie
Leslie Lowther
Wendy McLaughlin
Joe Mielczarek
Monica Murphy
Donno Ojeda
Dick Pomo
Arvilla Rank
Chuck Schmidt
Shelley Peterman Schwarz
Gus Sorenson
Susan Tesker
Gary Tidmore
Jerry Vogt
Paul Yochum

• WYOMING

Barbara Baumgartner
Linda Baumgartner
Larry Cross
Michael Funkhouser
Steve Harris
Dean Kozner
Betty Rasmussen
Pat Tauber
Jim Veatch
Donna Weismiller

★ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1995 – 396 - 749 / 30828

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
1331 F Street, N.W., Suite 1050
Washington, D.C. 20004-1107

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use — $300

First-Class Mail
Postage and Fees Paid
NCD
Permit No. G-279

Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091-1589

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

BEST COPY AVAILABLE